

It go
nigh



Window on Jordan

Basking in the limelight of downtown Amman

By Raed Al Abed
Star Staff Writer

AMMAN IS a city that goes to bed early and rises with the roosters at the crack of dawn. This is a favorite saying of both locals and tourists. But it is far from the truth. Downtown Amman has a lot of stories to tell, and many of them are told in the dark.

Lately, though, the cold weather has pushed people off the streets, even in the downtown area, which means that even this part of the city has followed the rest of the capital: Hitting the sack early.

Stores, restaurants and cafes continue to pull

their shutters down early, despite the fact that the Eid festivities are less than a week away.

Even transport has become difficult, especially late at night, with many forced to share a taxi to reach their destination.

Only the famous Hashim foul and hmos restaurant extends its services till after midnight. But even Hashim misses the good old days.

"Our people are not hungry anymore, but tourists seem to have developed an appetite, lately, for hmos and foul," says Ahmad, 26, pointing to the scattered tables that are mainly occupied by tourists tucking into the dishes which Hashim is famous for.

Opposite the restaurant-cafe lies the cheap life of downtown: mini-bars, partially hidden from view, can be recognized by the steady but inchoate stream of people leaving their doors. Most of these places are now part of the 'antiquities' of the city.

Cheap drinks and friendly service provide warmth and comfort to the hunchback-like individuals who frequent these places.

"Many of the clients of this bar are elderly or in the above 30 age group," says Maher, 23, who sells smuggled cigarettes at the entrance of one of

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The **Star**

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Extends its best wishes to
His Majesty King Hussein
and the Jordanian people on the
occasion of Eid Al Adha

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

Les pauvres,
tels qu'on ne les
voit pas

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Survey details worldwide attacks on free press

WASHINGTON — At least 129 journalists were in prison in 24 countries at the end of 1997 for doing their work, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported in Attacks on the Press in 1997, its annual worldwide survey of press freedom conditions. There were 15 in jail in China, eight in Burma, seven in Kuwait, five each in Syria and Vietnam, and four in Peru.

The 443-page Attacks on the Press in 1997 provides detailed reports of press freedom conditions and issues in five regions and 117 countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestinian National Authority, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and Yemen.

In Algeria, authorities continued efforts to quash independent reporting of the country's bloody six-year civil conflict. While no journalists were killed in Algeria in 1997—nearly 60 have been assassinated since May 1993—journalists there still live in constant fear for their lives.

In Jordan, state restrictions on independent media left press freedom hanging in the balance. In May, the draconian press amendments nearly eliminated the country's feisty weekly newspapers that are known for their independent reporting on government policies.

In Saudi Arabia, Libya, Tunisia, Iraq, and Syria, the state-controlled broadcast media and press allow no outlets for dissenting voices. The Palestinian press has become more submissive to the heavy-handed practices of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority. In Lebanon, the government instituted prior censorship of news and political pro-

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Hamas vows to avenge death of top leader

By a Star Staff Writer
and agency reports

PALESTINIAN POLICE said one of the men killed in an explosion in Ramallah Sunday was a top leader of the militant Palestinian group Hamas, and that he had been killed before the explosion. Hamas blamed Israel, and has vowed to retaliate.

Palestinian police said an autopsy showed Muhiydeen Al-Sharif, 35, a Hamas engineer, was shot dead before the bomb went off. Palestinian police said Sharif was killed and his body placed near a car that exploded on Sunday in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

He was the leader of the Hamas military wing, which has carried out a series of suicide bombings and other attacks against Israelis. Sharif topped Israel's most wanted list of Muslim militants involved in deadly Hamas suicide bombings against Israeli targets.

A senior Hamas political leader, Abdul Aziz Rantisi, immediately blamed Israel for the killing and said Hamas will retaliate. The killing of the previous Hamas military leader, Yehiya Ayyash (also nicknamed Al Muhandis) by Israeli agents, triggered a series of



Remains of blasted car in which 'Al Muhandis' was found on Monday.

bombings two years ago. Israel usually does not comment on such operations. But on Wednesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quick to deny any Israeli involvement in the latest killing.

Sharif's death comes in the wake of a failed US mission to salvage the stalled Middle East peace process. On Monday US peace envoy Dennis Ross ended a four-day Middle East shuttle without securing an agreement from Israel and the Palestinians on a US initiative to restart the deadlocked peace process.

Ross had been trying to get the two sides to accept a US proposal for an Israeli withdrawal in stages from 13 percent of the West Bank—a pull-back that would be accompanied by Palestinian steps to combat terrorism and safeguard Israel's security.

Prime Minister Netanyahu rejected the 13 percent pull-back and did not commit to another figure during a fourth and final meeting with Ross late Monday, before the American mediator headed back to Washington.

Netanyahu's spokesman David Bar-Ilan said, however, that negotiations with the United States and the Palestinians will continue and that there had been movement toward resolving the year-long stalemate.

"There's no deal, but I know the difference between leading water and real progress, and there was real progress," Bar-Ilan said. "It is fair to say that Israel is not willing to go 13 percent, but we might be willing to find a creative solution."

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat left for a scheduled trip to the Netherlands early Monday without giving his approval to the US proposal, but sources close to the negotiations said he seemed inclined to accept it if he could be sure that Israel would implement such an agreement.

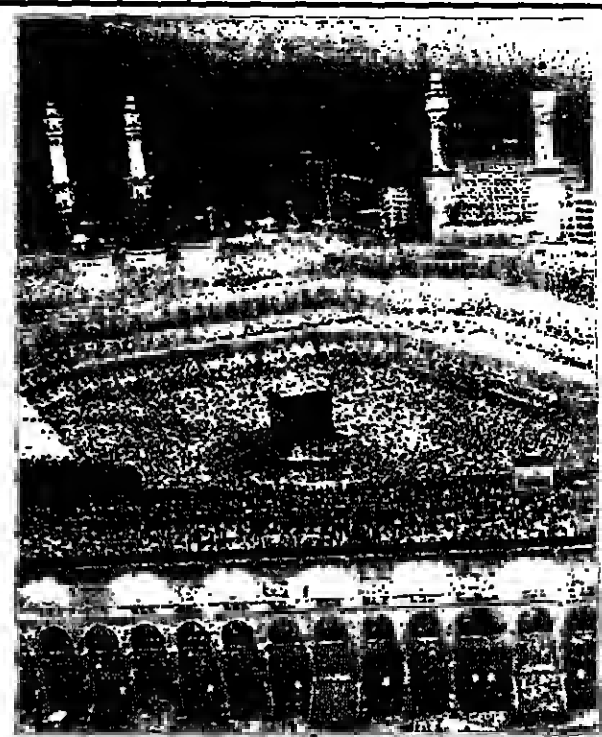
"Basically, he doesn't like the package because he thinks it is closer to Israel's position, but given all of the problems going on between the United States and Israel, he would like to say yes," said one source, who asked not to be

Muslims arrive in Saudi for Hajj

Thousands of pilgrims were expected to arrive in Saudi Arabia's Hajj Terminal on Wednesday to meet a midnight deadline for their entry into the kingdom to perform the annual hajj pilgrimage.

Saudi Arabia said on Tuesday more than one million Muslims had arrived for hajj, which reaches a climax on April 6 when pilgrims march to Mount Arafat, the site of Prophet Muhammad's last sermon 14 centuries ago. The culmination of the hajj is the Eid Al Adha or sacrifice feast, which falls on Tuesday, April 7.

Up to 10,000 medical staff have been put on round-the-clock call. Last year, a fire swept through a desert tent camp killing 343 people. Saudi officials said it was caused by a pilgrim trying to cook a meal on a gas stove in his tent. It spread quickly engulfing over 70,000 tents.



Islamist fortunes surge in civic elections

AMMAN (Star)—March, apparently, was Islamist victory month. They swept seats in two professional associations and three university student council elections. Major victories are expected to continue in April.

The final win came at the end of March when Islamists won a major landslide in the elections for Student Council at Muta University. Islamists took 73 seats of the 98-man body.

Observers believe that these victories point to the fact that Islamists will continue to dominate the most vital institutions in the country. Despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is not represented in the Lower House, observers feel that their strong presence in civic institutions have vindicated their decision not to run in last November's parliamentary elections. Islamists say that the movement is consolidating itself and is already gaining more grass-root support.

The latest win was the sixth so far among elections to civic institutions held in the country last month. Despite the fact these institutions are traditionally considered Islamic strongholds, the successive victories are putting an end to speculation that support among the people could very well take a



Islamic students contest one man, one vote of UJ

tumble, because they have ousted themselves from Parliament. Indeed their boycott of the elections was originally seen by many analysts as an "historically bad decision."

The Islamists' first grab was in the 40,000 strong Jordan Engineers Association. They won all of the seven seats on the JEA's executive, in addition to the post of president and vice president.

They did it again in recent Agricultural Engineers Association elections, winning

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Israeli-Palestinian 'Sesame Street' seeks peaceful road

By Marjorie Miller
OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—Courage is not a quality usually associated with the production of the children's educational television series "Sesame Street," on which innocent Muppets teach the ABCs and 1-2-3s.

But put an Israeli Muppet on "Rehov Sumsum" and a Palestinian Muppet on "Sharna Simsim," let the purple and orange monsters meet and suddenly the words "courageous" and "brave" are being used to describe the Israeli

Palestinian co-production that begins airing 1 April.

This Middle Eastern version of "Sesame Street" is at once a symbol of hope for peaceful coexistence and a sign of how wrong things have gone with the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: It strives to teach mutual respect but risks being seen as subversive on both sides.

"You did it," executive producer Lewis Bernstein, with the New York-based Children's Television Workshop, told his Israeli and Palestinian colleagues at a preview celebration last week. "We knew

it would not be easy. We were right.... You have persevered."

And now, Bernstein said, "This is likely to be seen as a Rorschach test. We still don't know how, in the end, children and parents will react."

The fear is that the participants in the joint project will be accused of selling out to the other side, of creating a fantasy peace in an area still mired in conflict.

Israelis and Palestinians won't be the only ones watching the reaction. Children's Television Workshop already has had queries from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Ireland and South Africa about the production by Israel Educational Television, or IETV, and Al Quds University's Insti-

tute for Modern Media.

"Rehov Sumsum/Sharna Simsim" was conceived in 1994 during what many believed was a new era of peace brought on by the historic handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

But the first meeting between the two sides was delayed when a Jewish law student assassinated Rabin in November 1995 over the deal to trade land for peace.

When Rabin's successor government was ousted in the May 1996 elections and the more conservative Benjamin Netanyahu was elected,

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World
Report

09.1.11/13/98

Basking in the limelight of downtown Amman

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three joints. Maher says his clients buy cigarettes and ask him to put it on their tab, so their debt keeps mounting. Eventually they do pay. "It's not in usually money, but in trade," the young man points out. "They bring me a jacket, a carton of cigarettes, and sometimes even money, though this doesn't happen very often."

It's a way of hustling. Maher says he wouldn't leave this place for the world. The clients are kind to him, helping him out in bad times, in exchange for wiping their slate clean.

He confided that one old guy even made a *masala* for his father to go back to work despite the fact that he had reached retirement age.

But there is a certain street ritual that also binds Maher to his patch. He says there is a sort of "honor agreement" between the town sellers not to intrude upon the corners of one another.

One of the other common sights in the streets is the sweet-bitter smell of coffee. Abu Eissa coffee corner, just opposite the old building of the Greater Amman Municipality, is a traditional haunt for taxis. "I can't work without Abu Eissa's black coffee," says Sami, a 34-year-old who drives a cab.

"Sometimes I drive all the way from home in Marka (west Amman), ignoring all people, just to have a cup from Abu Eissa. If [coffee] doesn't have the same taste when I drink it at home."

What's the secret? Old-man Abu Eissa was not the right man to give an answer. Instead, Jameel, 31, and another taxi driver, who was on the road by 8 in the evening, enthusiastically said: "It's a tradition, and a way to start work on the right foot."

Jameel, who has been driving for the last eight years, lamented that this is the worst time for taxi drivers, blaming the authorities for lack of planning. "There are too many taxi companies around, and



Good old days in present day Amman

almost every day you hear of a new one being established. Now, it's a street race for passengers. Things were easier in the past."

But taxi drivers are not the only ones who are feeling the crunch.

Stores continue to close early despite the coming Eid festivities, due to start next Tuesday.

"We have been waiting for government employees to receive their pay checks in the hope the market would pick up before Eid, but customers are not showing up," said Marwan, 36, a local who owns an imported clothes shop. "The market has been sleepy since last year. Most of the time we just waste time drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes."

And the downtown square also has many tales to tell. The most common site is the heavy presence of Iraqis in the evening, making this part of downtown their meeting point.

Most are unemployed people who don't want to go back home. They scratch out a living doing odd jobs to save for the one dinar penalty they have to pay for every day they stay beyond the legal limit.

"I am working as a body-building coach in a gym. The pay is not good but it helps me to survive," said Sa'ad, 28, a former ex-soldier in the Iraqi Republican Guard. From the monthly packet, he supports a family of eight back home in Iraq. Despite the hardship, he looks with optimism to the future. "Like many Iraqis, I want to go to a European country, where I can start a new life."

Among the Iraqis in the downtown area, you can find many shades of opinion: pro-Saddam Hussein, and those who oppose him.

Jordanians are sympathetic to Iraqis and try to help them whenever they can. "They are close to our hearts, so we do give them support and make them feel at home," said Khalil, a street *husta* seller in the square.

But Amman seems to be a hot favorite for attracting many from different corners of the Arab world. One coffee shop is a meeting place for Sudanese who are working in the country.

It is also the only coffee shop downtown that continues serving after midnight. "We meet here almost every night after a long hard day," said Osman, 31. "This coffee shop has Sudanese who hold different political views."

Hamas vows to avenge death of top leader

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identified. "On the Israeli side, they don't like a number of things, particularly the size of the further redeployment. And they are insisting on the concept of reciprocity, whereas the American approach is to concentrate on parallel actions rather than conditionality," the source said.

US officials have declined to give details of the American proposal or specifics of the negotiations. Israeli media have reported that the United States is promoting a 13.1 percent withdrawal that would take place in three stages over 13 weeks, while the Palestinians would have incitement in the self-rule areas, ratify

changes in the Palestine Liberation Organization covenant—eliminating clauses calling for the destruction of Israel—and give Israel a complete accounting of the number of Palestinian police and security forces.

Netanyahu denied media reports that a compromise was emerging in which he would agree to an 11 percent pull-back—up from the 9 percent he has previously said is the most Israel can offer.

"We have not discussed specifics on percentages, and therefore reports of a supposed agreement are not true," he said.

Ross was to return to Washington overnight to brief US Secretary of State Madeleine

Albright and, later in the week, President Clinton on the results of his mission. He is expected to make another trip back to the region in the coming weeks.

Earlier Monday, Ross traveled to Egypt to brief President Hosni Mubarak on the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and, sounding frustrated, suggested that American patience was running out.

"At some point, we have to bring this effort to a conclusion," he said, hinting that the Clinton administration will not keep up mediation efforts indefinitely.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Dutch singer expresses love for Jordan

By a Star Staff Writer

"LOVE AT first sight"—that's what happened to Dutch singer Diana Ring. However, she didn't fall in love with a person, she fell for an entire country.

Diana is now in Jordan, having been brought over by the Ministry of Tourism.

She sings in 14 languages and hopes that Arabic will be her 15th. "When I was 16, I saw His Majesty King Hussein on TV. My mother said 'look in the eyes of this man—he has warm feelings and the kindness of a father.'"

Since then Diana has become very attached to Jordan and its people. "I used to collect pictures of the King and all the members of the Royal Family. I considered them my movie stars," Diana says. Her dream came true when she met the King and Queen, and later, Crown Prince Prince Hassan.

A hallid in German was sung by Diana and presented on King Hussein's birthday. The hallid—an appreciation of Jordan—was also translated into English. She was recently interviewed by the Tuesday Branch Show on Jordan Radio, and

answered the questions spontaneously and openly. This lucky lady, a mother of two children, one of whom is named Petra, began her career as an opera singer

prospective visitors from the outside, and to that end, Diana has agreed to have her latest song made into a video, with backgrounds of popular local tourist spots like Petra, Jerash, Wadi Rum and downtown Amman.

Minister of Tourism Agel Biltaji said, "Love at First Sight" is being produced free of charge in cooperation with the Jordanian Tourism Board (JTB).

Kamal Dafish, producer and composer of the lyrics, told *The Star* that a second video clip will be filmed in the Jordanian desert with Diana appearing as a bedouin lady living in a tent, who wakes at dawn to admire the scenery, bake bread, and, naturally, do a little singing.

"Love at First Sight" talks about a romantic relationship between a foreign lady who comes to tour Jordan and is attracted to a masked man in a traditional costume. As it turns out, it's not a love affair, but it does symbolize the love for Jordan that lives in the heart of Diana Ring.



and only later turned to the pop music world.

"Music is one way of introducing and promoting a country's culture to

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Survey spotlights attacks on press

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grams broadcast abroad by satellite, while the media remain subject to broadcast and press laws that restrict news content.

Press laws in Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, and Yemen enable authorities to prosecute journalists for reprinting on alleged government corruption and other controversial domestic issues. International and Arabic satellite networks have become a popular alternative source of news for residents of Tehran, Damascus, and Algiers, providing a means to circumvent government-imposed restrictions on the flow of information. Internet use has begun to spread gradually in many countries through the region despite government efforts to limit its use.

Compiled from the first-hand research of CPJ's professional staff, *Attacks on the Press in 1997* is the single most authoritative, comprehensive, and up-to-date source of information on the status of press freedom around the world. The book documents in compelling detail nearly 500 attacks carried out to silence journalists and news organizations through physical assault, imprisonment, censorship, and legal harassment. It also describes CPJ's action on behalf of hundreds of journalists through emergency response and fact-finding missions, personal appeals by CPJ board members and staff, grassroots efforts, diplomatic channels, and media campaigns.

To view *Attacks on the Press in 1997* online, visit CPJ's web site at www.cpj.org.

Israeli-Palestinian 'Sesame Street' seeks peaceful road

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several members of the Palestinian team quit the project, despairing over the prospects for peaceful coexistence.

As if to prove them right, an Islamic extremist suicide bomber killed himself and four Israelis in a Tel Aviv cafe on the eve of the filming of Palestinian segments at IETV's Tel Aviv studio.

But Palestinian producer Dolly Wolbrum was committed to carrying on.

"During production, it was very hard emotionally for both sides," Wolbrum said. "But we felt we must do this despite the assassination and bombings, because this is what the show is all about."

The "Relay Sumsum/Sharna Simsim" producers have not only created two streets for two peoples, they also have made two versions of "Sesame Street" with several "crossover" shows in which the Muppet meet, Israel, which already has had "Sesame Street" for several years, will air 60 episodes of 27 minutes each, with many segments on tolerance among different sectors of Israeli society as well as all of the Palestinian-produced material. About a fifth of the Israeli population is Arabic-speaking.

The Palestinians, who are just being introduced to "Sesame Street," will get 20 shows of 15 minutes each that include the crossover segments but otherwise very little of the Hebrew material.

The crossover segments teach tolerance and respect for each other's language and culture. While stressing similarities between the two peoples, however, they are a sad reminder of how little Israelis and Palestinians really know about each other.

In one segment, a 3-year-old Israeli youngster named Dafi visits the Palestinian "Sharna Simsim" to deliver a falafel to Adel, a bilingual music teacher, sent to him by his cousin Amal.

an Israeli-Arab who lives on Rehov Sumsum. There, Dafi meets a 3-year-old Palestinian youngster named Haneen.

"We eat falafel on Sharna Simsim—do they eat falafel too?" Haneen asks Adel.

"Of course, Haneen. They eat falafel on Rehov Sumsum too," Adel answers.

Kuttab, the Palestinian producer, said that Israelis on the project had wanted an introductory segment in which the two sides meet and become fast friends but that the Palestinians rejected the idea.

"We said no, that in reality it takes time to get to know each other. The political situation doesn't permit hugging and kissing when people are still dying. It is more credible to have a gradual build-up," he said.

The two sides agreed before production began that they would stay away from sensitive political issues. No soldiers in uniform, no flags, no other symbols of nationalism. And yet they ran into problems a few times when the Israelis felt the Palestinians were taking political stands.

In one script, a Palestinian Olympic runner was to have been described as representing the "Palestinian state." Wolbrum said she told Kuttab, "I can't put 'Palestinian state' on government television."

"They didn't want to change it... I couldn't accept it."

In the end, the runner, Majed Abu Marajil, was unable to get out of the Gaza Strip for the

shoot because of an Israeli military closure.

The shows try to break down internal walls and stereotypes as well as the Israeli-Palestinian barriers. On the Palestinian side, one of the human characters is Leila, a modern and spunky 12-year-old girl who loves computers and e-mails friends around the world.

On the Israeli side, Sharon, a shopkeeper is a 23-year-old modern religious man living in what clearly is a secular neighborhood. And the theme song incorporates Arabic and alternates between Western and Eastern-sounding music.

Kuttab describes the "asymmetry" in the two sides' situations. Israelis had a government institution behind them, a studio and years of experience in children's television. Palestinians had an inexperienced private media center behind them and the will to learn.

"We started from scratch," Kuttab said. "We were involved in every aspect of our production, from writing to puppeteering to production. I am very proud of what happened. We gained a tremendous amount of training that we never would have gotten otherwise, and we have done a good job giving Palestinian children a program to be proud of. They have nothing else even remotely close to this."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Islamist fortunes surge in civic elections

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seven seats as well as that of the post of president and vice president.

The victory in the student elections at the University of Jordan was particularly significant because of recent changes in procedure thought to weaken Islamist prospects. Despite what is regarded as the deliberate introduction of the one man, one vote system which made inroads in Islamic support, the Islamists maintained a significant presence on the Student Council.

They won 51 one seats of the 80-seat student council—a slight reduction of previous majorities—while their nationalists and right-wing competitors won only 29 seats.

But the loss number Islamist seats was compensated by an increase in the number of votes they received. According to a university poll the percentage of voters increased 14 percent to 71 percent.

The same held true in elections that took place at Zarqa Private University.

Islamists took the majority of the Council seats, though cynics would say that this is expected since it is effectively an Islamic university. What ever the case, Muslim students won 22 of the 27-seat council.

But in all fairness, the rest of the students were independents.

Next Friday, the Islamists are expected to start the month of April in style, as members of the Jordan Nurses and Midwives Association elect their 11-member council. The Islamists are already guaranteed eight seats since the other four midwives are standing as independent candidates. Eight candidates are competing for the rest of the six seats in the Nursing share, while six of these are running under the Islamic "white list."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Settlements bring West Bank future to brink

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Unlike the previous government of Yitzhak Rabin, which signed the Oslo accords, the right-wing coalition of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been allowing construction not only in settlements close to Israel's current border with the West Bank, but in the heartland of Palestinian-populated areas.

At the same time, it is reluctantly turning authority over portions of these same areas—under the Oslo accords—to Palestinians, who expect to declare a state on that land in little over a year.

Dennis Ross, President Clinton's envoy to the Middle East, Monday concluded a four-day exercise aimed at trying to head off the conflict of those two paths. He sought to persuade Netanyahu to honor Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's call for a "time out" on settlement expansion and fulfill agreements to turn over more of the West Bank to the Palestinians, in return for steps by the Palestinians against terrorism.

Reports in Israel suggested Netanyahu might agree to a temporary freeze on settlements deep in the West Bank in return for silent assent by the Americans for Israel to continue building in controversial areas around Jerusalem.

Netanyahu Monday dismissed those reports. "We are not talking about a settlement freeze at any stage," he said.

In the past, attempts to curb Jewish settlement expansion have produced more words than results. The number of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has expanded steadily, increasing by roughly 9 percent annually even under the "partial freeze" of Rabin's Labor Party government.

There are now 4,800 housing units under construction, according to the Israeli group Peace Now, which monitors the settlements, and another 5,000 empty—a claim the Israeli government denies. Mossi Raz, head of Peace Now, said more settlements are being built, a long-range strategy to overcome occasional political obstacles.

"In the opinion of Bihl Netanyahu, every hall is a sign of weakness," said Shul, the president of the local council of Eli, a settlement midway between Tel Aviv and the Jordanian border. "Netanyahu is always saying that he will not take down a single settlement. And since he is building within the settlements, it shows that he means what he says."

"If he doesn't take down any settlements, if they all remain under Israeli control, I don't see any chance of a peace with the Palestinians," said Raz.

The conflict is daunting, because the settlements are no longer just a few places with shanties housing a handful of political extremists. Fifteen years ago, there were about 21,000 settlers; today there are more than 160,000.

Khalil Tufajli, a cartographer at the Orient House, a Palestinian center in Jerusalem, has been watching the growth of settlements like Eli. Although the Israeli government contends it has started no new settlements since Netanyahu took power in 1996, Tufajli said there are 13 new developments under the guise of an "extension" of existing settlements—extensions that in some cases reach for more than a mile to a single new mobile home," he said.

"Since Netanyahu, the bulldozers are working 24 hours," he said.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Petitioner
AND: NASER MARAHEL.
Respondent

Legal Notice of Service by publication

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COMES NOW: the Petitioner, Eman T. Elswerky, and respectfully states as follows: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the public that the Petitioner Eman T. Elswerky, has filed her Petition for Dissolution of Marriage against the Respondent, Naser Maraheel, with the Allen Circuit Court, County of Allen, State of Indiana. Petitioner respectfully requests that the bond of holy matrimony be dissolved. A FINAL hearing in this matter has been scheduled in the Allen Circuit Court on the 11 day of May 1998 at 3:30 p.m.

Dated on the 11 day of May 1998 at 3:30 p.m.
Dated Feb. 26 1998

A.B.
Lisabeth A. Blosser
Clerk of Allen Circuit Court

Prepared By:
Anthony T. Adorf
Attorney LHM19247-64
116 E. Berry Street, Suite#1000
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JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Outstanding dues!

Transparency, fighting corruption and going after administrative malpractice are today's buzz words. Indeed, the Ministry of Administrative Development was especially set up to cut through the fat and produce a lean bureaucracy whose hallmark would be efficiency. But it seems that the wheels of government do tither, and heeth; government bureaucracy continues to grow, and with that you can expect some form of sluggishness to infest itself. From this we can get to the point, you may say. The other week, a very interesting news item was published in the daily press about what can only be described as typical civil service behavior—not wanting to admit to anything, something, which I might say happens all over the world. The Audit Bureau, itself a government agency, has suggested that there are 609 cases against government departments. What's more disturbing is that some of these cases were filed 26 years ago and are still waiting to be solved. What's more, some of the cases raised by the Audit Bureau involve huge financial misconduct.

Islamic win

The Islamists are here to stay. The latest proof lies in the Islamic win in the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA). Its Islamic president Hassan Jabir, running on a "White List" won a landslide majority of 981 votes over his nationalist/ leftist rival, Mohammad Abu Ayash, who received only 467 votes. The Islamists also took the post of deputy president. Abd Al Hadi Falahat was voted in by 1001 votes, beating his nationalist/ leftist rival who got only 439 votes. The Islamists also dominated the executive council of the AEA.



Jabir

Bordering on Ideology!

Rael Nijim's lecture at the Amman West Rotary Club about the future of the Middle East peace process has created a bit of a controversy in the ranks of Islamists. The bone of contention surrounds the fact that the lecture was given at the Rotary Club, a part of an organization which Islamists view with suspicion. While Nijim, an independent Islamist and a former minister, strongly defends the place, precisely because Rotary is an international organization, and would carry the message across to worldwide audiences, other Islamists see the issue differently. Dr. Hammam Saeed, a former Islamic deputy, plainly says these clubs are suspicious since they are part of the Freemasons movement. He added that giving lectures or seminars in these organizations is rejected because they only "serve the interests of their clubs by marketing themselves and gaining more members." Similarly, former Islamic deputy Mohammad Abu Faria, widely regarded as a hawk, recites the same chapter and verse. But he puts forward a more disturbing view. He says that "these Rotary Clubs not only call for normalization with the Jews [Israel], but also share a common belief with the Freemasons." He adds that "we are not allowed to meet people who have specified their ideological, political and strategic position by recognizing the Jewish state, and recommending normalization relations by holding such meetings is not a good thing."

No to normalization

The mayors of six local municipalities in the north of the Kingdom have refused an invitation to visit Israel. The invitation, delivered through the Jordanian Democratic and Peace Movement, was made by the Mayor of the Israeli Keryat Municipality. The Jordanian mayors say that the reason for their refusal to visit was their perception that the invitation "was not so innocent as it would first appear." They added that the visit involved an invitation to go to Jerusalem, and that would have meant effectively recognizing Israel's stranglehold over the city.

Armed robbery

An armed robbery outside a bank in Juwdeh's central market was carried out earlier this week. The three robbers got away with JD 250,000. What is alarming is the way the robbery was carried out. One of the robbers, who was dressed up in a policeman uniform, stopped the driver of the security van outside the bank, and asked to see his driver's license. As this was being done, the man pulled out a gun and ordered the driver back into the van. The van, followed by the other two robbers in another car, was forced to an area free of people. At that point, the van was stopped, the robbers took the plastic bags full of money, and made their getaway.

Explosion at school

An official source at the General Security Department said an unidentified device exploded Saturday at 1:30 am at the entrance to the kindergarten of the American Modern Schools in Amman, causing minor damage. The accident resulted in breakage to front windows and doors of the building. The source added that nobody was hurt at the school which is owned by a Jordanian. According to the source, investigations are underway.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali briefed the press Monday on the latest visit of HM King Hussein to the US. He said the focus of the trip involved a routine health check-up, bilateral ties between Jordan and the US, described by Majali as excellent, and the latest developments on the peace track, including ways of moving forward on the Lebanese and Syrian fronts, methods for bridging the current gap between the Palestinians and Israel and finding a final solution to the Iraqi question.

Society seen through lens of local history

By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

HISTORY is an essential form of knowledge. It reinforces a nation's identity, puts its culture in perspective and acts as a preamble to change.

It was with this in mind that more than 35 scholars participated last week in a unique conference titled "The Social History of Jordan." The event held under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan, in cooperation with AL Urdun Al Jadid Research Center (UJRC) and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Jordan, was held between 24 and 26 March and dealt with different topics ranging from historical fact to current cultural development, including enquiries into changes and possible challenges related to the future of the country.

"This meeting is a pioneering attempt to bring out aspects of our national history that are often neglected, and which should not be restricted to government leaders and political decision makers," Hani Hourani, director of UJRC said. "Our democratic atmosphere urges us now to focus on previously prohibited or uncomfortable issues," Hourani continued, citing such examples as the history of labor movements, national uprisings, formation of political parties and various social organizations and cultural habits.

The conference bore out his claim. For instance, a paper presented by Dr. Ali Mahaftha, associate professor of History at the University of Jordan, discussed relations between the government and the opposition

in Jordan.

Participants—mostly from the United States, Britain, and Jordan—came voluntarily, without remuneration, based on their various interests, and their desire to share them. "Financial problems presented a big obstacle, that's the reason why only 50 percent of the invited experts managed to come," Hourani said.

Despite the low turnout, Hourani pointed out that a primary expectation of the conference was to encourage participants to more fully develop and document their findings as well as to help gather and organize these in libraries and research centers—as well as over the Internet—where they would be more widely available to those doing similar work.

The organizing committee exercised no particular standards in selecting the experts; instead, they gave a blanket invitation to interested parties through a "call for papers" on the Internet and among Jordanian universities.

"In addition, we want to promote the concept of our conference in a way that would encourage further dialogue between academics and students," Hourani added. "We feel that such a meeting will be of considerable importance in creating strong relationships between experts in the field through the mass media."

Interest in social, cultural and political changes in Jordan pushed many experts to spend years in the country. Because of this, most of the participants spoke Arabic fluently; the mixing of Arabic and English to discover and clarify the particulars of Jordanian social and

cultural life created a comfortable and interesting atmosphere throughout the various sessions.

Richard Antoun, Professor of Anthropology, State University of New York at Binghamton spent more than 30 years in Jordan, studying changes which took place in Kura, north of Jordan. "I've worked in Kura since 1959, so I have witnessed the changes which took place in the region. For example, in the past we used to walk miles just to find a transport vehicle," Antoun said. "Since that time there's been a veritable revolution in Kura with regard to transportation."

Antoun's presentation, titled "Changing Settlements Patterns and Local-Level Political Structures in Kura: From Makhlara to Village Council to Baladiyah in Kura, Ak-Ma," mentioned a number of changes concerning family values, especially factors which effected transformations of some long-standing social traditions.

The program was rich in the many controversial issues introduced.

"My paper deals with the question of local women's right to acquire land. I discussed how certain land policies which began in the Emirate of Transjordan in 1927,

affected women's ability to own, acquire or inherit land," Michael Fischbach, Professor of History at Randolph Macon College, told The Star.

"Typically, most Transjordanian males denied women's inheritance rights, those guaranteed both by Islamic law—Sharia—and by the civil code," Fischbach noted.

"The interesting thing is that although the land policy opened the possibility for women to recover their land rights, I feel the policy ultimately worked against them," he continued.

Fischbach's interest in Jordan goes back 10 years, to when he studied land ownership, particularly in the north of the Kingdom—specifically Ajlun. He also has a daughter living in Jordan, so he considers himself, as he said, *Im Al Balad* (citizen of the country).

Paul Lalor, associate professor of Islamic and Middle East studies, Edinburgh University, Scotland, introduced the conference to his unique study, "Naming Jordanian-Palestinian Relations."

"I want to show in my paper what and how collective nicknames tell us about social history, in particular, identity," he said.

Press C

By Raed Al Abed

Privatization and smooth talk in Parliament

The first ordinary session of the Lower House ended with a stormy debate on the policy of privatization. Though many deputies at the beginning of the discussion protested the government plans to privatize public institutions—surprise, surprise—this was not the case when it came to a vote. Indeed, the majority voted against a fiery memo signed by 43 deputies against privatization.

It seems that the deputies' initial outrage simmered down by some sweet talk from Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Jawad Al Anani, who promised that the government would only continue the privatization process after careful consideration.

He noted that privatization, which comes within a comprehensive economic development process, cannot be a success without pooling the efforts of the executive and legislative apparatus of the state.

"Privatization has become an essential strategy for numerous states in the world, particularly those who once followed a socialist model," Anani said in the government's reply to parliament.

Anani also assured that the government will present a law to prohibit monopolistic practices, and another to establish what is called "generations funds."

The deputy prime minister, who defended privatization, faced a barrage of criticism from deputies at the beginning of the session. Forty-three deputies signed a memo demanding that the government stop the strategy.

However, such a protest did not last long and was overcome by the government's will. Only 15 deputies voted in support of the suggestion to stop implementing privatization, while 61 deputies voted against.

The 180 degree turn-around of the majority of deputies gave cause for considerable controversy, as did the failure of deputies to gain press support for their attitudes and methods of discussing the privatization issue. But political observers suggest that it was the direct pressure of the government that accounted for the abrupt change of opinion among the legislators.

The deputies seem to have a dual attitude. When they address their constituents, they do not hold back any criticism of government policies, but once under the dome, their anger seems suddenly to subside. This is a clever tactic: the lawmakers gain the support of both their constituents and the government.

Anani, for his part, realizes in advance that the deputies' final resolution will never surpass the government's will. Perhaps this is why he began his speech with the word "implementation," stressing that the government will maintain responsibility for many critical sectors including health, education, water, social development and environment.

Parliamentary backers of privatization constitute a clear majority in the House. Yet the parliamentary debate revealed that the Lower House has a limited understanding of the matter; even the speeches delivered by deputies critical of privatization failed to reflect what constituted its core. Perhaps the question at this point is whether it is possible to "have it both ways." As it is, some deputies seem more interested in changing their minds than in examining the real nature of the issues at hand.

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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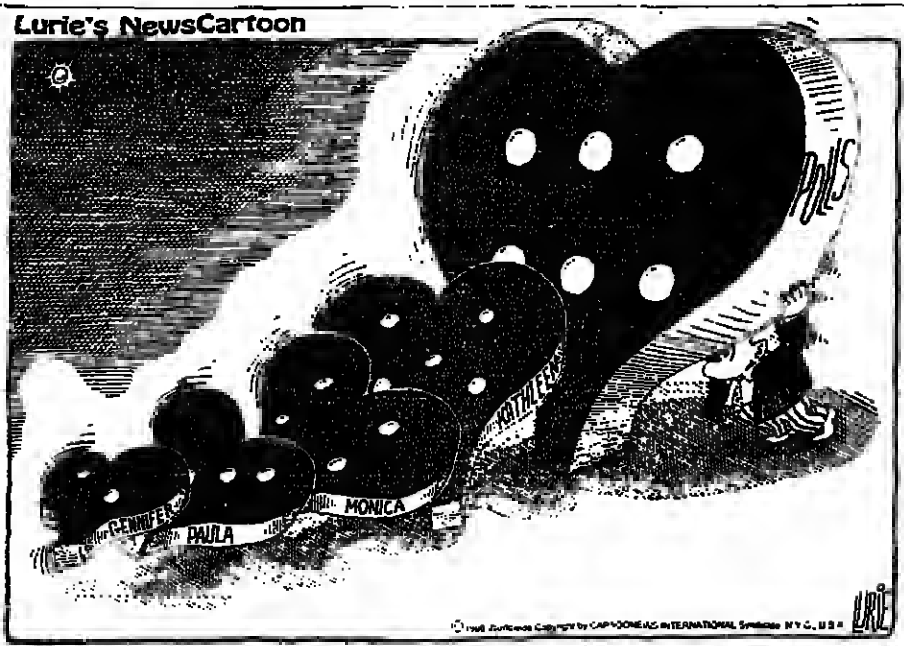
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Defying the Domino Theory

Our Say...

Playing Washington's game

NO ONE expected US special envoy to the Middle East Dennis Ross to break the deadlock that is crippling the peace process. In fact, the outcome of the visit came as no surprise because the Israeli position has remained unchanged since US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited the region last September.

If Ross' visit achieved anything, it only underlined the magnitude of the crisis that has put the peace process on hold and set the region back to the years preceding the Madrid initiative. More importantly, the visit exposed the fragility of the US position as a mediator, a sponsor and a broker of peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Without US pressure on the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, diplomatic efforts to jump-start the peace process and put it back on track are futile and inept.

Netanyahu has managed to dictate the agenda and steer the process and in so doing, he has compromised the US position and frustrated foreign policy makers in Washington. The embarrassment over the US failure in the Middle East has come clear in recent days as US officials made veiled threats about Washington pulling out of the peace process altogether. Which is fine by Netanyahu.

The US administration lacks the courage and will to re-engage the parties and take necessary risks to translate agreements into reality. Thus Netanyahu was able to snub President Clinton and his top aides while relying on the solid support for Israel in the US Congress.

So what if the US does pull out of the process? Even without pulling out, the peace process is dead—so long as the political power structure remains unchanged in Israel. The Israeli public has allowed Netanyahu to steer their country away from commitments made to the Palestinians under the Oslo and Washington accords. With no real challenge within the Israeli political structure, Netanyahu is unlikely to change his mind on accepting and applying the principle of land for peace.

The Arabs by now realize that the US is the worst kind of mediator between them and the current Israeli government. This is particularly true in that the US is not showing any sensitivity to the interests and rights of millions of Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular.

Since the Europeans and the United Nations have been chased away by the United States, Washington's departure will not change the present reality of the peace process.

The Arab side must understand that there is no use pinning hope on the current US administration emerging as an honest broker and a pro-active interlocutor. Netanyahu is today able to legitimize his occupation of Arab territories while bragging about Israel's interest in keeping the peace process alive.

These bitter realities will continue to overshadow any genuine hope of a breakthrough in the absence of a new Arab initiative that challenges the rules of the game. So far we have been forced to play Washington's game with Israel's rules. No wonder the Arabs can't come out as winners.



Palestinians clash with Israeli troops on the eve of the 22nd anniversary of the Land Day. Monday. This year's occasion has a special significance as Israel also celebrates the 50th anniversary of its establishment since 1948. Israeli soldiers, sieging Palestinian cities and villages, did not risk entering them, asking Palestinian police to help them quell the demonstrators.

Globalization and NATO

Military alliance for economic expansion?

By Howard Baker Jr., Alton Frye, Sam Nunn and Brent Scowcroft.

THE DEBATE on NATO expansion is generating many more questions than answers. The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee has identified a number of such questions bearing on the proposed admission of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Unfortunately, the committee calls for approving those admissions before the answers are available.

Among conditions the committee has prescribed for admitting these new members is a requirement for elaborate reports to be filed after they take their seats in NATO. Looking toward the formulation of NATO's new strategic concept, the committee mandates a study of the concept's implications for US military forces not only in Europe but worldwide. The committee demands analysis of threats to be faced by the United States and its allies to the year 2010. It cites the growing menace of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons as well as the prospect of cruise and ballistic missiles in unfriendly hands. Furthermore, the resolution requires preparation of "alternative system architecture" for ballistic missile defense in Europe.

It makes sense for the Senate to offer guidance on NATO's future strategic concept. But no one, in or out of the Senate, can responsibly judge how expanding NATO relates to a concept that has not yet been defined or submitted for evaluation.

What is possible—and urgent—is to anticipate the strategic consequences that would flow from expansion. The administration advises that process as open-ended and continuing. It has encouraged the expectations of many countries—the Baltic states, Bulgaria and others—that they, too, will become members of NATO. Yet it has not begun to confront the military requirements that would impose.

Military professionals accept that defending the Baltics, for example, would almost certainly entail the use of nuclear weapons in the event of attack by a resurgent Russia. Including Poland would already bring NATO to the edge of Russian territory at Kaliningrad. There and elsewhere, the combination of its deteriorating conventional forces and fear of unbounded NATO expansion is moving Moscow toward increased reliance on nuclear weapons—a doctrine that might at best be called "inflexible response," at worst a "hair trigger." If deterrence fails and armed conflict erupts, avoiding escalation could be difficult.

Most worrisome is the contradiction between open-ended NATO expansion and our gravest security priority, mastering the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

That task begins with controlling the vast strategic arsenal still present in Russia. That mission and the collateral effort

to stem proliferation of scientists, technology and hardware depend on active cooperation with the Russians.

In US Senator John Warner's phrase, Russians perceive NATO expansion as replacing the iron curtain with an "iron ring" around their country. To tell a country scared by repeated invasions from the West that NATO expansion is good for it only spurs nationalist sentiment. It weakens the reformers with whom we must forge cooperation.

Other issues cry out for scrutiny. A Russia that feels cornered in the West will look East and South for strategic partners. Early signs of a marriage of convenience between China and Russia point toward mounting resistance to US policy in other regions. Russia also holds cards in the global energy game. We cannot assume that, if tensions mount, it will swallow its pride and refrain from pressure on its neighbors' energy supplies or from complicating access to oil and gas resources in Asia. Russia will gauge its strategic options in light of how we exercise ours.

Far from suggesting a Russian veto over NATO decisions, these considerations underscore the absolute necessity of clearly calculating our own interests and priorities. It will be no service to American or European security if the course we set undermines democratic trends and political stability in Russia. Still less will it serve our interests if the process induces more dangerous military postures and interrupts arms restraints in Russia.

The pending Senate resolution has other problematic features. In an extravagant reading of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty—which provides merely that allies will consult when any of them is threatened—the resolution authorizes NATO to "engage in other missions" without defining those missions or setting criteria for them. A strong NATO is surely necessary for flexible coalitions of the willing to meet crises like Saddam Hussein's aggression in the Gulf. Even those convinced of that proposition, however, question how far the Senate should go in preauthorizing such efforts.

There is a great and essential tradition by which senators seize the occasion of historic international agreements to shape high policy. In 1972, Senator Henry Jackson persuaded his colleagues to require that agreements on strategic forces include equal limits for both the United States and the Soviet Union. The Jackson provision proved crucial in bargaining with the Soviets. Similarly, Senator John Glenn took the lead in demanding thorough examination of the SALT 2 treaty's verification provisions. The Senate's attention to surveillance needs paid major dividends in later agreements on nuclear and conventional forces.

Those precedents commend themselves as senators weigh NATO expansion. Now is the moment to modulate this process, and a key to doing so lies in another policy endorsed by the Foreign Relations Committee. The committee states that US policy is to encourage expansion of the European Union as essential to creating an undivided Europe. That is the premise of the proposal by Warner and Senator Daniel P. Moynihan, to synchronize the three candidates' entry into NATO with their accession to the European Union. This would steer policy toward a sensible emphasis on economic and trade development in Europe, rather than premature, costly security undertakings. It would also lower expectations of a rush toward further NATO expansion. With so many questions hovering over NATO expansion, the imperative for senators before you give consent. Otherwise, the Senate may condemn a vital alliance to the creeping impotence of excessive commitments and clogged decision-making.

Baker and Nunn are former senators; Frye is with the Council on Foreign Relations; Scowcroft was an adviser to Presidents Ford and Bush. LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Free-market conspiracy theory

Donn by John Grey.

Reviewed by Max Wilkinson

WHAT SHOULD one do when a distinguished professor of politics stands on a soap box proclaiming that market capitalism must prepare to meet its doom? Pass by on the other side? Entreat him to use fewer adjectives? Or should one patiently explain the other possibilities?

John Gray, former professor of politics at Oxford and now at the London School of Economics, sees conspirators everywhere. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Trade Organization, Lady Thatcher, the US administration—they are all in it together, hatched by a sinister army of speculators. Their grand project is to promote free markets throughout the world with devastating consequences.

It will destroy the bourgeoisie, undermine traditional institutions, create mass unemployment, and promote war as national states compete for diminishing resources. The sufferings to be inflicted by this "Utopia of a global free market" will rival those caused by communism. "Already, it has resulted in over 100 million peasants becoming migrant labourers in China, the exclusion from work and participation in society of tens of millions in the advanced societies, a con-

dition of near anarchy and rule by organized crime in parts of the post-communist world, and further devastation of the environment."

Is anyone listening? No doubt there is an audience among the faithful—and on the chat shows. But Gray may in part be talking to himself. Not long ago he was an ardent supporter of the New Right, whose market philosophy he now exorcises with the passion of a convert. This would have been a better book if he had said as much, and explained whether it is he or the world which has changed.

Of course, he has a point. The rapid evolution of global markets and increased mobility of capital can create big dislocations. The price of steady increases in world output is that people lose their jobs, or wages are driven down as industries lose out to competitors or fail to adapt to new technology. Traditional skills may come under pressure and the institutions of society may start to change.

Gray is also right that sovereign governments have less room for manoeuvre than in the past. But he fails to notice that governments which are humbled by the "casino of currency speculation" often have only themselves to blame. Incompetent economic management, excessive borrowing or debasing of the currency are the common causes of a collapse. Gray speaks of "fiscal rectitude" as if it were an instrument of torture by those trying to "re-engineer" free

markets in the "late modern" period. But it simply means not borrowing more than you can afford to. It is ordinary prudence.

Like many polemicists, Gray gets over-excited by his own verbiage. Consider this, for example: "In their cult of reason and efficiency, their ignorance of history and their contempt for the ways of life they consign to poverty and extinction, they embody the same rationalist hubris and cultural imperialism that have marked the central traditions of Enlightenment thinking throughout history."

It sounds bad. But who are these people? They do not exist. As in most of this book, Gray is describing a battle of abstractions, mainly between theoretical extremes. He seems to imagine the world is full of free market Utopians wandering round with a bag of experiments to try out on unsuspecting countries. He refuses to notice that the present economic consensus, imperfect as it may be, is partly a reaction to past failures to control debt, inflation and unemployment. He does not bother to explain how his own nostrum of job creation by Keynesian deficit spending and increased welfare payments, would avoid these problems next time round.

Thus, he ascribes the fall of Margaret Thatcher's government in Britain to the inherent contradictions in her free market "project." But hers was, in many ways, a highly pragmatic government, searching for an answer to the problems of "stagflation" and excessive

trade union power. As in New Zealand in 1984, something had to be done. Gray lists the harsh consequences of liberalization with relish, but he gives scant account of the benefits, or of what might have happened if the problems had been tackled with less resolution.

The biggest disappointment of this book is the feebleness of its alternative vision. To moderate the "anarchic" market forces of the global economy, Gray would like a "managed regime" by some sort of world government, presumably operating on quite different principles from the present transnational organizations. He admits this is Utopian. He does not attempt to explain how it could work, or why it would avoid the mistakes of managed regimes such as Soviet Russia, Cuba and North Korea.

The countries which he admires for combining a market economy with strong social cohesion are Germany, Japan and the tiger economies of south east Asia. Gray writes: "In the contest between the American free market and the guided capitalism of east Asia, it is the free market that belongs to the past." Well, maybe. The continued vigour of the US economy, persistently high German unemployment, stagnation and corruption in Japan and the financial crisis in the rest of south east Asia, might suggest a question or two. But Gray is a prophet unassailed by doubt, or indeed by the complications of economic data.

Financial Times Syndication

Middle East Beat

by Khairi Jambou

Linking resolutions

ISRAEL HAS been, for some time, occupied with the idea of withdrawing from southern Lebanon. However, the extremely difficult circumstances of maintaining an occupation, added to the continual loss of Israeli life, is making the issue of withdrawal more serious than a mere "toying with ideas."

Of course, there is also the added benefit of driving a wedge between the Syrian and Lebanese positions, to tempt Lebanon to agree to a separate peace with Israel. That would end the occupation of the south, and conversely the raison d'être for the presence of Syrian troops in the country, especially now that Lebanon has returned to a state of normality.

The instrument for the withdrawal of Israeli troops—UN resolution 425—theoretically can be implemented automatically, without any necessity to assemble a UN force to oversee the withdrawal or to resolve circumstances. But Israel has left a sting in the tail of its proposal, that of putting conditions on the Lebanese government to disarm the militias fighting Israel in the area, primarily Hizbollah. If Israel wanted to withdraw from the south, it could do so immediately, since resolution 425 does not have a provision for conditions. To the contrary, it demands that any withdrawal be unconditional.

The other major player in Lebanon, Syria, is upholding the linkage between resolutions 425 regarding Lebanon, and 242 regarding Syrian occupied territory. Though the resolution regarding Lebanon is unconditional, in Syria's case, 242 carries with it an implicit understanding of land-for-peace. Consequently, in the case of Lebanon, the authority of the Lebanese government is the final one for determining the nature of a relationship with Israel after the withdrawal.

In the case of Syria, the return of the occupied territories must necessarily be followed by an end to hostile relations with Israel. The clear Israeli message to the Lebanese government is that it ought to take its destiny into its own hands, control the conditions of its own border areas, and take sole responsibility for their future relations with Israel.

Under the circumstances, Israel assumes that the Lebanese government can be pressured into distancing itself from the Syrian peace track, for it would not have any reasons to carry on with hostile relations once the Israeli withdrawal was effective. In this way, Syria would become the only country with grievances to redress, and perhaps would be easier to deal with outside the formula of Lebanon and the war of proxies.

This is a reasonable scenario to underscore, providing Israel is serious about proposals to withdraw from southern Lebanon, and is not just "testing the waters" of relations between Syria and Lebanon. In any case, judging from the continued shuttle diplomacy between Beirut and Damascus, indications are very clear that the organic link between the Syrian and Lebanese positions vis-à-vis Israel are not being strained by the temptations of the Israeli offer.

One can say that Syria has managed to link UN resolutions on southern Lebanon with those affecting the Syrian occupied territories. Facts on the ground regarding the situation in southern Lebanon suggest that the idea of land-for-peace is inherent in this case as well—it is not just a matter of unconditional Israeli withdrawal.

It is undoubtedly essential for the Israelis to withdraw from Lebanon, but it seems that it is equally important to the Syrian-Lebanese alliance that the withdrawal takes place on the basis of Israel's own decision rather than one undertaken and guaranteed by an international body like the UN. This being the case, the Israeli offer, without guarantees of security from a third (neutral) party, or from anyone else, will likely be a withdrawal under hostile conditions.

Business scene

Over the past two months, the Aqaba port has seen a noticeable activity compared with the same time in 1996. The port handled the delivery of about 2143 million tons against 1828 million in the same period last year, a rise of 17%.

Overland trucks handled 696,000 tons at the beginning of this year. Annual revenues of the Ports Authority reached about \$63.5 million.

The budget of the Jordanian Dairy Co. showed a growth in its assets estimated at JD4.2 million in 1997 compared with JD 3.6 million. It also generated earnings of more than JD 1 million. The company's annual report revealed that it produced 7598 tons of pasteurized milk and yogurt and 881 tons of cheese in 1997.

Its sales reached JD 7.1 million in 1997 against JD 6.2 million in 1996.

Overall revenues of the Advanced Pharmaceutical Industries Co reached JD 278,900 in 1997 compared with JD 248,900 in 1996. The company's assets rose from JD 6.8 million in 1996 to JD 8.1 million in 1997.

The total budget of the Arab Insurance Co. was JD 11.7 million by the end of 1997. The rise of JD 1.2 million compared with 1996. The ratio of its technical profit to premiums was about 5.4% and its fiscal solvency was 69% in 1997 against 63.4% in 1996. The right of its shareholders went up by more than half a million dinars to reach JD 3.7 million.

Volume of trading for both the organized and parallel markets in the Amman Financial Market (AFM) on Monday reached JD 1,437,837, turned over shares 1,853,038 and carried out contracts 644, sources of AFM said. The sectorial contribution was as follows: banks and financial companies 55.45, insurance 1.2%, services 13.3 and industry 30.1%, the sources added. Price index in market value for today's closure reached 166 points, the sources concluded.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1508
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFr	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

JEDCO boosts Jordan toward international export market

By Itham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

EXPLORATION OF the means of supporting Jordanian exports and reinforcing them on the international market is critical to Jordan's economy. The Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centers Corporation (JEDCO) is adamant about seeking ways to enhance the quality of domestic products by giving them a helping hand. They also want to ensure that human resources are firmly in place to face global challenges of the second millennium.

Mr. Farouk Al Hadidi, acting director of JEDCO, says that the corporation stresses the participation in regional and international exhibitions in order to promote national products. This is in addition to a wide range of activities going on this year to help market local industries. First, there is a project to implement a system of hazards analysis and critical control points (HACCP) in the foodstuff industry.

The aim behind this project is to boost the quality of produced foodstuffs in five Jordanian companies by developing a system that guarantees their safety before

they finally reach the consumer," Al Hadidi says.

A specialized local consultation bureau is in charge of carrying out the project and offering technical assistance. Also, this bureau keeps in contact with organizations designated to receive the HACCP certification after evaluation and assessment of the five companies' performance.

JEDCO also cooperates with the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that food and drug companies in Jordan are aware of the quality control necessary to guarantee easy access to the American market.

The corporation plans to achieve this target by arranging regular visits of FDA experts to Jordan, organizing foodstuff industry workshops, and training Ministry of Health employees in the US at the expense of the FDA. "Training programs cover inspection of pharmaceutical industries, receiving drugs, register files and getting to know about FDA requirements and conditions in the domain of foodstuffs and drugs," Al Hadidi continues.

JEDCO also gives special care to other industries such

as ready-made garments.

"Those working in the industry are trained in ways to develop and enhance their products. The training includes technical and marketing skills and the selection of reputable companies with which to train. Also, some Jordanian manufacturers are given the opportunity to add to their expertise by looking into the highly-developed garment industry of countries like Italy."

JEDCO is also seeking to remove obstacles and bottlenecks facing the productivity of the industrial sector. This is achieved with the help of local and international organizations as well as through the expertise of other local companies that have already dealt with similar situations.

Beneficiaries of such services are expected to number somewhere between 30 to 50 companies. JEDCO follows up on contacts with some institutions which provide financial support to various sectors such as the Industrial Development Bank and the Higher Council for Science and Technology.

Al Hadidi talks about the corporation's plan to conduct studies covering many branches of industry. The object is to provide assess-

ment of the benefits that have accrued to Jordanian companies who are awarded the ISO 9000 certificate. Also there is a study on development of small- and medium-sized industrial enterprises.

And there are other developments. The plan is to hold seminars and training courses in the ISO 14000 (for environmental management requirements), the CE mark (for safety in factories), ECO labeling, HACCP, product pricing and certification and FDA

provide them with all the necessary assistance to promote their products, reduce production costs and have the privilege of competing with better incentives in order to secure a stronger standing in the international marketplace.



Al Hadidi

Air France expands service to Amman



AIR FRANCE has identified Jordan as one of the priority markets in the Middle East to 1998.

The success of the Year of Jordan in France in 1997, an increase of 11.3 percent of French tourists in Jordan during 1997 compared to 1996 and the re-negotiation of the bilateral agreement between Jordan and France signed September 1997 to Paris allows Air France to participate actively in the development and expansion of Jordan in the coming summer.

Frank Thiebaut, Regional Manager of the Arabic Peninsula and the Middle East and Mr. Jean-Jacques Ledouphin, Area Manager for Jordan, West Bank and Iraq highlighted the following points:

Air France increases its flights to and from Amman with a 4 day non-stop service weekly between Amman and Paris from 30 March, compared to 3 flights via Damascus in 1997. In addition, 3 non-stop flights weekly will operate out of Damascus.

This represents an increase of 130 percent in terms of capacity offered by Air France, compared to last year's capacity. In this manner, Air France is participating

in the development of Jordan by answering to the increasing demand in the dual fields of tourism and business.

The new flight schedules are in local times, as follows:

Departure from Amman, 7:30; arrival in Paris, 11:50 every Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Departure from Paris, 13:00; arrival in Amman, 19:00 every Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday.

The new schedule offers increased opportunities for quicker and convenient connections through our Paris gateway, Charles de Gaulle Airport, to one of the 200 destinations served by Air France to Europe, America and the whole world with short transit times between flights.

These flights will be operated with the High Technology Airbus A320 equipped with two cabins: L'Espresso (24 business class seats) and Tempo (120 economy class seats); smoking seats will be available on both classes. The aircraft will also be equipped with on board telephones.

To provide better service to our customers from the Middle East, one of our crew members will speak Arabic.

The partnership between Air France, Delta and Continental Airlines offers more than 250 destinations connecting with Amman - Paris - Amman flights through Charles de Gaulle Airport. A code-sharing agreement with these two American Partners becomes effective July 1998.

The Air France Agency in Amman will launch its "call center"—which offers a continuous information service daily from 08:00 till 20:00—beginning in April 1998.

On this occasion, Air France offers its valuable customers in Jordan the opportunity to double their "Frequency Plus Miles" on Amman-Paris-Amman flights, when traveling during the months of April and May on all classes. The Air France Frequent Flyer Program "Frequency Plus" will enable its customers to win free airline tickets, upgrades, hotel accommodation, car rentals, a trip to Disneyland Paris—and more.

Air France, the official carrier for football's World Cup this year, reported excellent financial results in 1997 and is undergoing a privatization scheme by opening its equity capital to the public in June 1998.

Widen the range of investment with Arab Bank

ARAB BANK'S new strategy of widening the range of investment options available to customers and strengthening the Bank's product delivery capabilities will play an important role in its future success. Consequently, the Bank has announced a new structure for its Global Personal Banking Group.

Michael McKinley, previously a Partner with Coutts & Co., the UK's leading private bank, has been appointed Head of Global Personal Banking for Arab Bank. A Middle Eastern Specialist, with many years of banking experience in the region, Mr McKinley was Head of Private Banking for Saudi British Bank before joining Coutts & Co., in London. He will be based in Dubai, having responsibility for personal banking strategy and services on a global basis.

Samir Salfi, previously Head of private banking for the Arab Bank in Singapore, has been appointed as Regional



McKinley



Salfi



Quttaneh

Personal Banking Head. Mr Salfi, based in Dubai, has responsibility for the implementation of the Bank's Personal Banking strategy and co-ordinates the Investment Executive team.

Lyad Quttaneh, currently

Head of Private Banking in London, has been appointed Director of Corporate Communications for Global Personal Banking Group. He has been assigned the responsibility of advertising and public relations campaigns specifically for the personal banking products, aiming at the introduction of services to customers across the Middle East, and assisting in the development of Arab Bank's corporate image.

Lyad Quttaneh, currently

Giant takeover
BMW bids for Rolls-Royce

By Roger Taylor and Graham Bowley

BMW, THE German carmaker, is to take over Rolls-Royce Motor Cars for more than \$501 million. Vickers, the engineering group which owns the UK luxury carmaker, is announcing that it has agreed to accept BMW's bid.

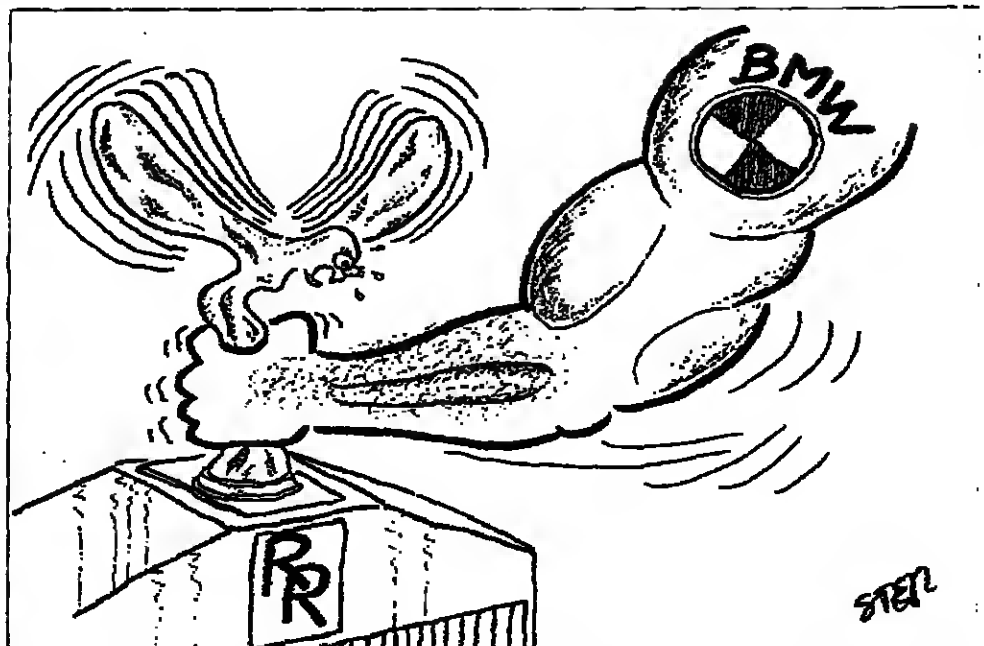
The speed with which the deal has been tied up is surprising other bidders, not least BMW's rival Volkswagen. Both had submitted bids last week, with BMW ahead of VW.

VW had been considering increasing its bid but with BMW pressing for a quick settlement, it appears to have been overtaken by the speed of events.

Vickers shareholders will be pleased that the company has brought the negotiations to such a rapid conclusion. Some feared that by publicly auctioning the company rather than negotiating privately with potential buyers, Vickers had committed itself to a sale without ensuring there was adequate interest from buyers. There were concerns that the process could drag on for several weeks.

The price of more than \$501 million falls below the top end of expectations. The potential value of the Rolls-Royce brand and the company's status as a trophy asset had led some to speculate that Vickers might get about 650 million or more. However, Vickers will not be unhappy with a price which is more than twice BMW's opening offer of about \$300 million.

The decision is bound to produce complaints of unfairness from other bidders. Two other groups made it into the last stages of the auction: Doughy Hanson, the venture capital



group, and a consortium of Rolls-Royce enthusiasts led by Kevin Morley, former Rover Group director.

Mr Morley's supporters have complained that their approach has not been taken seriously enough because Vickers presumed only a large car company could manage the long-term investment required to maintain the business.

They have also attacked the role played in the negotiations by Rolls-Royce, the aero-engine manufacturer which formerly owned the car company. When it sold Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, it retained rights to withdraw the brand name if ownership moved outside the UK.

However, it has made clear from the outset that it would support a takeover by BMW. BMW had an advantage be-

cause of a close working relationship with both companies: it supplies engines for the Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph car and has a joint venture with the aero-engine group.

Lazard Brothers, the investment bank handling the auction, also received approaches from a variety of interested parties, including several wealthy individuals, but none made it into the final round of bidding. Some, such as the private financier Douglas Llamas, are understood to be angry that they were not allowed to participate fully in the auction process or given proper access to Rolls-Royce management.

Vickers said the decision was based both on the value of the bids and on the ability of the company to put forward credible plans for long-term development of the company.

This last condition is thought to have counted against financial bidders such as Doughy Hanson, which specialises in leveraged management buy-outs. Its normal mode of operation is to own a business for about five years before selling it.

Rolls-Royce is understood to have suffered from under-investment in the past and is thought to need investment of approximately \$650 million over the next five years. BMW will be expected to increase the speed with which new models are introduced and may also decide to expand the marque's range to include, for example, a Rolls-Royce sports car.

Financial Times Syndication

MARKET WATCH

28-31 March

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
<p>↑ %</p> <p>1.81 3.81 2.65</p> <p>↓ %</p> <p>7.14 5.18 4.76</p> <p>General Price Pointers 168,050</p> <p>Trade Volume 1348017</p> <p>Stock Volume 1116851</p>	<p>↑ %</p> <p>7.69 5.00 4.76</p> <p>↓ %</p> <p>5.13 4.84 4.81</p> <p>General Price Pointers 164,340</p> <p>Trade Volume 1246485</p> <p>Stock Volume 1475972</p>	<p>↑ %</p> <p>5.33 5.00 4.00</p> <p>↓ %</p> <p>5.00 5.00 4.55</p> <p>General Price Pointers 166,090</p> <p>Trade Volume 1437844</p> <p>Stock Volume 1833033</p>	<p>↑ %</p> <p>5.38 4.76 2.94</p> <p>↓ %</p> <p>4.26 5.00 4.92</p> <p>General Price Pointers 165,770</p> <p>Trade Volume 923885</p> <p>Stock Volume 853304</p>

Highest Traded Stocks	JOVICO 397761	Al Aser Investment 209000	Gulf Bank 458735	JOVICO 176821
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All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646848 Fax: 646949

03.04.1998

Israelis, Palestinians work on Gaza Airport compromise

By Doug Struck

GAZA STRIP—The runway was empty and waiting. The control tower overlooked a serene, vacant scene. School kids munched through the departure lounge, gawking at what will be.

Soon, they were told, the Palestinians will open a grand airport of their own, a powerful symbol of the end of their national wandering.

And its name? Well, that has been a matter of dispute. said Fayed Zaidan, a principal in the negotiations with the Israelis. In fact, everything about this airport—one of the first fruits of the peace plan and approved by Israel and the Palestinians in May 1994—has been a matter of dispute.

The tortured history of those talks shows how the peace process, born in the optimism of airports and seaports and grand economic schemes, has become mired in a grinding hickering over details.

Take, for example, Zaidan said, the fight over the name: "Dahaniya Air Strip." The Israeli negotiators proposed it as an incendiary reference to a nearby small, guarded village of Palestinian collaborators regarded as traitors.

"No," the Palestinians replied, "We want Gaza International Airport."

"Dahaniya Airport," offered the Israelis, at a later session.

"Gaza International Airport," said Zaidan.

"Rafiah Air Strip," the Israelis eventually said, referring to another nearby Palestinian town. "Gaza Interna-

tional." "Rafiah Airport?" No. "Rafiah-Gaza Airport?" No. "Gaza Airstrip?" No.

Three months later, they agreed: The Gaza International Airport.

"No word was too small to fight over," said Zaidan. An Israeli official agreed: "Right at the beginning there was a dispute over everything."

And it is not all settled yet. The center line is painted on the runway.

Moroccan craftsmen are putting up the last beautiful hand-laid tile mosaics. The navigational equipment is waiting at the port of Ashdod.

But before the final protocol is signed and the airport can open, the two sides still must resolve "earthshaking" disputes. Such as:

■ Should the airport end, the designation on the tag affixed to passengers' luggage, he LLGZ, referring to Israel, or LVGZ, an unused code the Palestinians say would declare their independence?

■ How many minutes after Yasser Arafat disembarks can the Israelis search the Palestinian leader's plane?

■ Will an Israeli security guard stand at the main gate, or behind a special window?

Both sides concede these matters could be resolved fairly quickly if there were a mutual will to do so. "We could open in a month," said Sayed Basheer, who is overseeing the construction. "It's a centimeter away." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recently.

But the airport has been caught in the maneuvering over the larger course of the peace process. Israeli officials contend it is the Palestinians who are stalling.

"There's no question about it. The Palestinians are holding it up," said David Bar-Ilan, a Netanyahu adviser. The Palestinians, he said, believe the Israelis would use agreement on the airport as a

sign of progress in the peace process, and thereby relieve some of the growing international pressure on Israel to make broader concessions.

"They are under the impression that it may convince the Americans there is no need for an American plan" to unfreeze peace negotiations, Bar-Ilan noted.

The Palestinians say it has been the Israelis who have made the airport into a four-year bargaining marathon. "They never wanted us to have the airport," Zaidan said.

The Israelis, of course, disagree. "We weren't stalling. We were just insisting on the provisions of the Oslo agreement—that means hands-on security," said Bar-Ilan.

Many of the arguments have been over Israel's demand to control who comes and goes from the airport, and to inspect all cargo. Without that inspection, "they could bring 20,000 volunteers, trained in Libya. They could bring 50 tanks, heavy arms, mortars, armored cars," Bar-Ilan said.

For the Palestinians' part, "we don't want to see any Israeli," said Basheer, who spent eight years in Israeli prisons, and then left to study navigation in Moscow. But he is resigned to their presence: "I never expected that one day I would be working together with the Israelis. But it's an agreement, and we will respect it."

Israeli officials, for the most part, will be hidden behind one-way windows, but will inspect each passenger's travel documents, handed to them by Palestinian clerks.

"The Israeli presence will be invisible," a senior Israeli military official said.

After the Palestinian National Authority took over control of the Gaza Strip in 1994, the Palestinians seized on an agreement for small-plane traffic from Gaza to Jer-

icho, and quickly began building with a much bigger vision.

Off the routed main highway in the Gaza Strip, past a few bedraggled palm trees, clumps of cactus and some lethargic sheep, one comes to a sparkling terminal complex of about 13 buildings.

The main terminal has an elegant Moroccan design of arches. The VIP building has a fountain and a dome painted with the intricate geometry of Islamic design—lit by halogen lights.

If the airport does not open, it will be a glorious parking lot. The Palestinians paved a 111,000-foot landing strip, long enough for a large jet, while Israel envisioned a small strip for light planes.

"It is twice as big as they need," Bar-Ilan said.

"Why should tourists have to fly into Ben-Gurion" airport in Tel Aviv, asked Zaidan, the chairman of the Palestinian Civil Aviation Authority. On the table in his eighth-floor Gaza office are issues of Passenger Terminal World magazine and Jane's Airport Review. "We have a right to have an airport that can serve any destination."

He envisions TWA jets bringing tourists to the Holy Land, starting at Gaza. (Samson squashed the Philistines here.) At the least, he says, having their own airport will ease the agonizing travel travails for Palestinian workers, who have rarely been welcomed at borders even as they were sought across the Middle East to work.

The Palestinians borrowed \$18 million from Egypt and put up \$12 million more for construction. They received donations of \$35 million in equipment for navigation, airport control and baggage handling from Spain and Germany, Zaidan said.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Freij laid to rest in Bethlehem

Bethlehem—Thousands of Palestinian mourners attended the funeral service of Elias Freij, the mayor of Bethlehem for 25 years, who died of kidney and heart failure in Amman on Sunday. He was 81.

Freij's coffin, draped in a Palestinian flag, was carried by mourners in the city's streets before reaching the Church of the Nativity.

Freij, a Greek Orthodox Christian, retired last May after serving 25 years as mayor of Bethlehem. He also resigned from the post of tourism minister in Yasser Arafat's PNA after a prolonged kidney ailment. In December 1995, he presided over the first Christmas in Bethlehem under Palestinian rule, days after Israeli troops pulled out of the city they had occupied since the 1967 Middle East war.

Freij maintained close contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization during the exile years leading up to a 1993 agreement with Israel that allowed the Palestinians self-rule in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. "I doubt if anyone in the Middle East wants peace more than I do," said Freij, a member of the Palestinian negotiating team that

went to the Middle East peace conference in Madrid in 1991. At times, his moderate views earned him the enmity of both the Israeli government and leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A prominent businessman who comes from a distinguished Christian family, Freij owned a string of souvenir shops. But politics was his main occupation since he was first elected to the Bethlehem town council in 1963, when the city was under Jordanian rule.

He became mayor in 1972, five years after Israel occupied Bethlehem and the rest of the West Bank, and was re-elected in 1976, the last year municipal elections were held.

Freij publicly voiced support for the PLO as the only valid spokesman for the Palestinians. But in private he often castigated the PLO for what he called its unrealistic refusal to accept Israel. He was an ardent opponent of violence.

Freij, born in Bethlehem in 1918, graduated from the British-run Bishop Gohar School in Jerusalem.

He is survived by his wife, Victoria, and their six children.

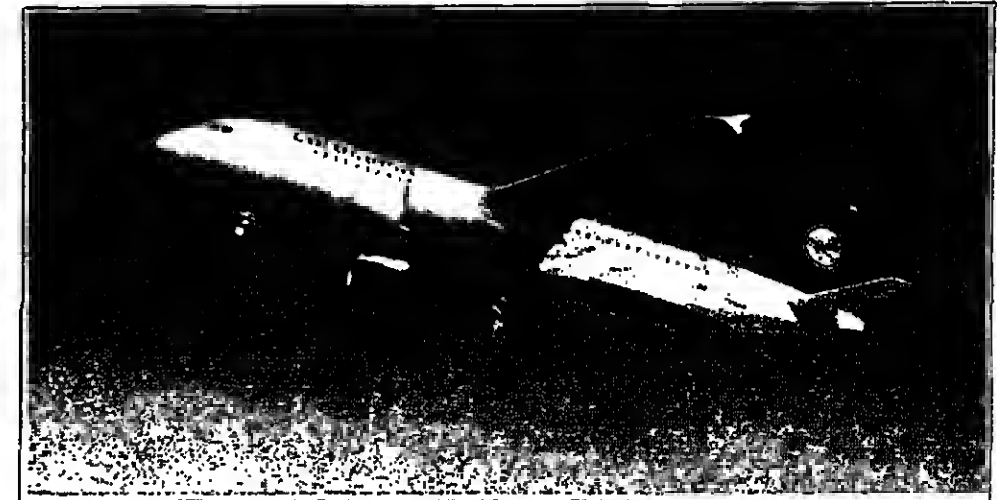


Lufthansa re-launches Amman-Frankfurt flights

AFTER AN absence of seven years, Lufthansa resumed its regular air service from the Jordanian capital. Beginning this week, Lufthansa is operating three weekly flights between Amman and Frankfurt. Flights depart Amman on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, leaving Queen Alia Airport at 7:50 (7:25 on Tuesdays), arriving Frankfurt at 11:45 (11:20 on Tuesdays). From Frankfurt, flights depart Monday, Wednesdays and Saturdays at 13:35, arriving Amman at 19:10.

"We are very pleased that the crane will once again be taking off from Queen Alia airport," said Josef Bodganski, Vice President Sales and Services, Lufthansa German Airlines, Southeast Europe, Africa, Middle East and Pakistan, on the occasion of the arrival of the first flight at Amman airport. "We feel that now is the right time to come back to Amman. The political situation in this area is now relatively stable and we see a strong potential for business and leisure traffic on this route," he added. "I would also like to thank our very loyal local customers for all their support, by using Lufthansa, on what ever routes they could, during the last seven years. We trust that our flights from Amman will once again meet with their approval." Mr. Bodganski continued.

Flights have been timed so they provide optimum connections to no less than 147 worldwide Lufthansa destinations.



which can be reached through the airline's main hub, Frankfurt. For example, the German city of Cologne and Bonn can be reached in seven hours and 10 minutes. Hamburg in six hours and 50 minutes and the trade fair city of Hannover in seven hours and 25 minutes. One the long-haul side, Newark Airport New Jersey, a convenient access airport for New York City, can be reached in 15 hours and five minutes while Washington DC can be reached in 15 hours and 20 minutes. Looking even further afield, Lufthansa now offers the fastest connection between Amman and Mexico City, with a total travel time of 18 hours and 15 minutes.

Since 1993 Lufthansa and the

Frankfurt Airport Company have been investing a total of DM500 million in a refurbishment and improvement programme for Frankfurt Airport, which is due for final completion by the year 2000.

Flights between Amman and Frankfurt will be operated with the modern Airbus A320 aircraft. The Airbus A320 provides a maximum of 140 seats, in both Business and Economy Class. The passenger cabin is furnished with all leather seats, configured five abreast in Business and six abreast in Economy Class. The seat width in Business Class is 49.5 centimeters and 43.6 centimeters in Economy Class.

On flights from Amman to Frankfurt, Business Class passengers will be offered a cocktail service, followed by a cooked breakfast, with a choice of three main courses. A hot snack will be served before landing. A full complementary bar service is available during the flight.

On flights from Frankfurt to Amman, Business Class passengers will be able to select from three hot lunches, against accompanied by a full bar service. In Economy Class a warm meal will be offered, along with a drinks service throughout the flight. A selection of duty free articles will also be on sale on all flights.

Inside its own terminal in

Frankfurt, Lufthansa is ideally positioned to expand its presence at its home base. In 1997, Lufthansa transported more than 22 million passengers through Frankfurt, about half the airport's entire air traffic volume. At peak times, Lufthansa handles more than 600 daily take-offs and landings with more than 75,000 passengers on German domestic, European and intercontinental flights. Frankfurt has long been the major hub in the Lufthansa worldwide network. About 60 percent of the airline's passengers pass through the airport, ideally located in the heart of Europe. Additionally, Frankfurt is becoming an important transfer point for a growing number of passengers connecting between the Star Alliance carriers Lufthansa, United, SAS, Air Canada, Varig and Thai Airways International.

The efforts an airline invests in fast, comfortable and smooth service on the ground count as much in passengers' eyes as service in the aircraft cabin. In general, there is a big demand for smooth handling at the terminal, spacious waiting areas, attractive shops and restaurants, and special services near the gates. Passengers also prefer, if ever possible, to board their flight on aircraft docked alongside the terminal building.



New JDF services at your doorstep

AS A Diplomat you are allowed to take piecemeal from your regular quarterly quota and enjoy a new monthly non-quota duty free goods without the exemption form plus a commercial discount on the original price tag with the best in service, quality, range of the widest choice of short & long term durable goods in the duty free business at highly competitive prices.

JDF has also new working hours from 8 am till 9 pm all weekdays except for Fridays. You can count on JDF: Aram-

ex personally collect your exemption forms. Free of charge, from the Embassy and channel them through an automated delivery system to safely reach JDF office, on time. Then our experienced team at JDF will handle your exemption forms on your behalf through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Finance Ministry in 48 hours and send you a fax informing you that your exemption forms are ready at Amman Duty Free Shop/City Terminal Building near the 7th Circle.

Count on our New service

within 72 hours of an Electrical Appliances exemption form reaching Amman Duty Free Shop/City Terminal Building near the 7th Circle we will quickly supply you with the following items to your door step: Gas and Electric Cookers, Cookers Hoods, Dishwashers, Washing Machines & Cloth Dryers, Refrigerators and Freezers, Microwave Ovens, Vacuum Cleaners, Room Air conditioners (Wall Splits), Audio Systems, Video Cassette Recorders, Camcorders, Television sets, TV/Video combinations.

Celebrate Your National Day with JDF by sending your National Flags & literature for to be hanged and distributed for Three Days ahead of the Celebration Date.

There will be a new Amman Duty Free Center at the 4th Circle—heart of the diplomatic quarter—coming in mid-June. It will have a mini-market, and your feed back on the kinds of commodities you would like to stock would be appreciated. Please fax your requests to us as soon as possible so we can accommodate your requests.

We invite you to the place of honor on the new RJ Crown Class.



Starting March 1st, we'll roll out the red carpet for business travelers on our new "Crown Class". On the ground, we'll pamper you with check in and advanced seating services. Our refurbished CIP lounges are luxuriously equipped for your added pleasure. You'll find fax and Internet facilities for your business needs. Inflight, indulge in First Class service. Stretch out on extra spacious seats. Relax with your new Personalized Video System, featuring a choice of 15 international hit films. On the ground and onboard, the new RJ Crown Class is an invaluable experience.

* Available on Europe, North America and the Far East routes.

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ROYAL JORDANIAN
Reflecting the Change.

Holmes hits Tokyo

Master sleuth is cult figure in Japan

By Marie Myerscough

LAST WEEKEND, crime fiction enthusiasts from all over the world gathered in Kamakura, a small town of Buddhist temples just outside Tokyo, for Japan's first international Sherlock Holmes convention.

Delegates indulged their passion through lectures, exhibitions and an auction of memorabilia—with Victorian costume optional for the last-night party. The host, the Japan Sherlock Holmes Club, is the largest Holmes fan club in the world: 1300 members and still growing.

Although Sir Arthur Conan Doyle never went to Japan, his hero is a cult figure there. "Foreigners would probably be astonished to know that we Japanese have been reading Sherlock Holmes since our elementary school days," says

Mitch Biguraishi, secretary general of this year's convention.

When prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said recently that, as a boy, one of his favourite books had been Sherlock Holmes, he could have been speaking for most of his fellow Japanese.

Aside from the translations of Conan Doyle's complete works, (56 short stories, four full-length novels, involving some 90 translators), Japan has also produced its own background books, adaptations, plays, films, children's versions, cartoons, parodies even an opera. Japan's leading TV channel is currently re-running the British series with Jeremy Brett in the title role. There is a Sherlock Holmes pub in Osaka, while Karazawa, a fashionable resort near

Nagano, site of the recent Winter Olympics, boasts its own shrine of the fictional hero.

Britain's delegate to the conference, Catherine Cooke, in charge of the Sherlock Holmes Collection in London's Marylebone Library, considers the Japanese Sherlockian fans remarkable. "They do nothing by halves," she says. "Japan got its statue 10 years ago. Edinburgh has only had one for a few years, while London's is still in the offing."

Sherlock Holmes was introduced to Japan at the end of the 19th century and within a few years had become a household name. The first translations were available (The Man with the Twisted Lip, A Study in Scarlet and The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes). Many Japanese crime writers owe their inspiration to Sherlock Holmes. Two of the most famous fictional



detectives from the 1950s, and still popular, include Kogoro Akechi, a dapper city sleuth created by Ranpo Edogawa, and his "country cousin," the kimono-clad Kousuke Kindaichi, the gentlemanly, rural detective of Seishi Yokomizo. Junior versions based on the fictional sons of popular investigators are a staple of children's comics.

Other western crime writers—Edgar Allan Poe, Dorothy L. Sayers, Agatha Christie, etc.—have Japanese fans, but none is as popular as Conan Doyle's hero. Why, given the

general popularity of the genre in Japan?

For most aficionados, Sherlock Holmes represents the archetypal English gentleman while evoking nostalgia for the Britain first encountered a century ago. Ardent fan, taxi driver Him Yamamoto, however, doesn't romanticize. Tapping his forehead vigorously, he states, "Holmes has a smart head. That's why we Japanese like him." Elementary, my dear Wada-san. ■

Financial Times Syndication

New age Cold War battles old symptoms

By Peter Whitehead

EATING AN orange does you no harm; it might even do you some good. But as a cold remedy, middle C beats vitamin C nearly every time.

As scientists pack away their pipettes, satisfied that there is no possibility of a cure for the common cold, a new generation of healing hands is searching elsewhere, working on prevention and relief of symptoms.

The new kids in the lab believe there is no need for a total cure; the common cold consists solely of symptoms, and a cold without symptoms is therefore no cold at all.

And it's where the cutting edge of medical research meets old wives' tales that is proving most fruitful.

At the forefront is that old playground joke "What do you call a boy with a runny nose and no Greenleaves?"

The young things in white coats have studied the genealogy of this punch-line and made a promising discovery: Henry VIII's favourite tune has

been found, in repeated clinical tests, to possess profound therapeutic qualities.

The healing power of music was well known in Henry's time and beyond. From the 16th century, Greenleaves and other popular tunes were hummed and strummed to cold

the next day.

But it was only music that had any real effect on symptoms, his team has found. If a song or symphony is in harmony with an individual's bio-rhythms, it is the number one all-round symptom-buster.

"It's the oldest remedy in the book but unused for 150 years because a few influential doctors found it odd. We are now having to debunk the myth that debunked the old wives' tale," Cross said.

As someone who once suffered a cold lasting 50 weeks—it began on August 8 1996 in the upstairs bar of London's Vaudeville Theatre—I begged to know more. How do people catch colds?

"Enclosed spaces," he replied. Lifts, airplanes, doctors' surgeries, offices. Don't go near them during the cold season. A germ from a cough or sneeze can live in a warm, sealed environment for up to 10 hours, ample time for it to make 50 laps around an office air conditioning system.

The next quickest way to catch a cold, he said, was to venture outside in winter with wet hair—it lowers the resistance to almost everything.

On the positive side, Cross is sure that the right selection of music means the cold war is almost won. The final nail in its coffin could be a simple test his unit has devised that can identify which tunes work best for each person.

I asked if I could try the test which will be available to doctors early next year. A small package arrived from California. I was to take it to my GP, who would administer the test.

Apart from the 45 hazardous minutes spent in the waiting room with what sounded like a dozen bronchial patients (I held my breath, the operation was painless: 18 micro-needles attached to a palm-sized computer extracted tiny blood and tissue samples. The results could be read in seconds).

The computer said I was category P8715/W1913. For cold prevention, I should drink black-currant juice as a catch-all multi-symptom suppressant. I needed a stiff dose of loud Welsh rock music. I left the surgery with a prescription for three Manic Street Preachers CDs, to be played very loud and often at the first sign of a sniffle. And so far, so good. My state of health has been so transformed that I can sometimes go to work, and without my constant companion, the handy packet of throat lozenges. I must recommend it to the neighbors—they recently seem to have been suffering from headaches, and surely, prevention is better than cure.

"But what we can do now is work on prevention, where fruit and sensible precautions are important. And if that fails we attack symptoms with exactly the right remedies.

"Steam, vapours, honey, lemon, drugs, they're all OK for a couple of hours. A belly-full of alcohol and curry is better though you usually regret it

Financial Times Syndication

Big feat for Bigfoot

Specialty shops deal oversize shoes

By Holly Finn

SONGS CAN sing, in particular songs about body parts. Take Fats Waller's "I Don't Love You

"Cause Your Feet's Too Big." Hearing it for the first time, a little girl looks down at her not-so-little shoes and considers herself warned.

She grows up though, and is generally sanguine. Except when she walks into a high street shoe shop, Waller's melody comes to mind and swells as she asks apologetically for something in size 9 (11 American, 42 Continental). The salesperson is cordial but cannot resist glancing down, barely swallowing a snigger before brushing her back out of the door.

We all feel disturbed by some physical anomalies. It may be big feet or an unexplained aversion to fruit salad, the inability to make one's hair look anything like it does after a visit to the hairdresser or a tendency to walk into things.

In the back of the brain we try to accommodate the anomaly, to finesse it. And sometimes the world lends a hand. If it is feet you are trying to finesse then be reassured—there are places on both sides of the Atlantic that cater to those who need larger shoes, places where a girl need not feel like a foot freak. They are worth celebrating.

In London, the most helpful is The Small & Tall Shoe Shop. Its name reads like a circus sideshow sign but that should not deter you. On one side of the room are the Lilliputians, on the other Gullivers, which go up to size 12. For those mourning the closing of Lilley and Skinner on Oxford Street, which used to stock hard-to-find sizes, this is the place.

The owners have been in the business for 34 years. They are keenly aware that no one who comes to them is average (size 5), and that a shoe that sits tight on a size 6 foot can make a size 9 look like a sunken stone. Joyce Rayment, who helps run the shop, taking its wares on the road occasionally to spread the word, is that rare salesperson—a size 4 who does not judge the less petite.

She offers a wide selection of Italian-made shoes, including styles by Claudia Chiari and Moda di Fausto, specially made for the shop. Some elusive varieties, like crumpled sandals that are spare on your foot yet do not topple your frame, are reasonably priced (£69.95).

In New York, Plus Nine is the best bet. Again, resist the urge to scurry away from the name and downstairs into Hermes for a 'one-size-fits-all' scarf. The owner, Bud Grant, knows what he is doing. Sizes go up to 10, and he features only the highest end: Stuart Weitzman, Via Spiga, Panchini, Isaac Mizrahi, Donald Pliner and Adrienne Vittadini (who paid a visit recently to pick up a pair for her niece). There are also dyable shoes with surprisingly stylish heels.

Grant is passionate about shoes and meticulous about colour and style. "They've got to have a little zip," he says. "They can't be dumb." For anyone with large feet who has given up and gone out in ugly slippers, this is a pumpkin place. Every pair in Grant's shop, from the hip, bulky-soled sandal to the sleek suede pump, looks right. The strappy evening shoes he sells are mostly under \$200, with delicate buckles and subtle stitching.

Perhaps most important, Grant respects the obvious: heel height is important to women with larger feet. They tend to be tall already. When a customer, holding an inch-and-a-half heel in hand, asks for something with a little less stack because her boyfriend's a bit shorter than her,

Grant is polite but firm. Uncowed, he tells her: "He knows you're tall. And he knows you're not getting any shorter. If he can't step up, well then..."

Not every shop offers such sage advice, but others do offer options. Crispin's in London, Tall Size Shoes in New York, Arthur Beren on Union Square in San Francisco and McBs in Oakland, California, specialize in larger sizes.

Nordstrom's has a vast selection of larger sized shoes, and non-judgmental salespeople. In fact, most department stores, including Harrods (up to size 9) and Fortnum & Mason (also to 9), occasionally carry larger sizes.

The first and last refuge for those near the top of the foot-size graph is the luxury shop. Two are worth noting. John Lobb's shoes regularly run to 8, but they run big. If it is still a tight squeeze, you can have any pattern made in your choice of colour and size, for 20 percent added to the regular price. It may be unfair, but it is also very 20th century to be penalized for something genetic.

Besides, the salespeople at Lobb are so civilized. They will clean your shoes gratis when they are worn Camille, a lace-up that manages to be sensible and sexy (£250), is a good choice.

Things also fall together at Salvatore Ferragamo. Most styles go up to size 9, but also run a little large. From the standard bow-on-the-front Vans, which fits perfectly and comes in every possible colour and skin (£190 and up), in all the most timely and tempting styles.

Ferragamo remind you that shoes—even in your size—can do more than shoe you from A to B. These zip you there. And like a good song, they last. ■

Financial Times Syndication

Palatial ruin is Russian heir's dream house

By Daniel Williams

PETROVSKOYE, Russia—So what if the majestic homestead you claim is a wreck—no roof on the main palace, no windows on the outbuildings, burned-out rooms, little heat, trash all around.

So what if neighbors in the village mockingly call you "the Prince" behind your back and wonder aloud who would want to live amid such rubble.

So what if there are ghosts around. And so what if Russian authorities turn their backs on you and ignore your assertion of ownership.

It all means nothing to Yevgeny Meshchersky, a member of an aristocratic family whose noble origins date back to medieval times. This is his estate, he says, and he aims to restore it to its former grandeur.

For more than a year, Meshchersky has squatted on property owned by his great-grandfather and great-uncles an hour's drive west of Moscow. Early in the Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik government confiscated the palace, houses, church and land. Over time, the property was picked over by scavengers, abandoned and left to rot.

His cause is an unusual effort to recover an aristocratic heritage in a country that was once a bastion of nobility. Russian authorities say the effort is doomed; that the past is past.

"This is my homeland. Russian history is written in my family name. So this is where I stay," said Meshchersky.

The fate of Russian aristocrats and their property is an old subject that has been somewhat inflamed by controversy over the forthcoming burial of Russia's last royal family. In July, 80 years after the murder by Bolshevik gunmen of Czar Nicholas II and his wife, children and servants, the Romanov family's bones are to be interred in St. Petersburg.

The funeral is a kind of rehabilitation for

the Romanovs, who were reviled in Soviet times as a symbol of Russia's decadence. The family's remains will be placed among those of their ancestors in the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The past year has seen suggestions to restore czarist rule in some form. Last year, Kremlin officials floated an idea to designate Georgy Romanov, 16, a member of the far-flung Romanov family, as czarist heir-apparent. The boy, who lives in Madrid, would return to Russia, live in a dacha outside Moscow and have military training. It would all be designed to confer a monarchic stability on the country.

There have, on the other hand, been few moves to rehabilitate the descendants of lesser nobility like the Meshcherskys. A Moscow club of aristocrats is trying to promote their cause, but there is no public cry to restore their property. Five lawsuits have been navigating Russia's court system and none has been successful.

Recently, the Moscow Times editorialized against restitution, saying it would open inconvenient floodgates. "Russia simply cannot afford the instability that would result if the courts were to decide in favor of the descendants of robbed nobles. Where would it end?" the editorial asked.

Oleg Scherbachev, a heraldry expert at the Nobility Assembly, an association of aristocrats, said one nobleman has received a lease on some family property, but otherwise, "it's unlikely in the near future (that) any way will be found to get property back."

"If our state considered itself the successor to the Russian Empire, things would be easier. But this state is a direct successor to the Soviet Union," he said.

In Petrovskoye, attitudes are indifferent at best. "I had a grandfather who owned a big farm. Now it's a collective left over from Soviet times. I don't expect it back," said grocer Tanya Borisova. "Why should the Prince expect it?"

"God help the Prince," said Vladimir Markov, a customer. "If he can find money to fix the place up, good enough. Maybe he can even toss a few rubles my way."

Meshchersky's goal is complicated by confusion over who controls such property. Nominally, the state property committee does, but in many cases it cannot come up with papers to show it. On the other hand, the government is reluctant to turn land over to heirs—in Russia, land ownership is still a subject of debate.

However quixotic the goal, Meshchersky aims to carry on. He says he wants to establish a museum in the ruined palace, make an inn out of the other buildings and set up a "club for intellectuals." But he also seems to have a political agenda, of which his claim to the estate is an obscure advance guard. "Monarchy is the traditional form of governing Russia. Even the Communist regime was set up like a monarchy. We should establish a constituent assembly and vote for a new ruler," he said.

"The present government is just a continuation of the past. It passes laws against theft of property, but it is the owner of millions of acres of stolen land that belongs to thousands of people who were killed mercilessly."

Meshchersky, 47 and stocky, is an engineer who until two years ago worked in a Ukrainian ceramics factory. An aristocratic friend from Russia suggested he return to claim the Petrovskoye estate. Aristocratic groups have been donating to his cause, helping him repair a two-room apartment in the house where he, his wife and four children live.

The house is one of four that surrounded a central palace built 200 years ago. The palace once had a dome and eight-sided central hall decorated with neoclassical Greek columns.

The dome is long gone—a soldier blew it up as part of a scavenging operation for bricks. The grounds are littered with junked bedsprings, discarded axles and metal cans.



Yevgeny Meshchersky stands before the ruins of a 200-year-old palace he says belongs to his family. The palace is an hour's drive from Moscow. Photo by Daniel Williams.

Stables were converted into a toy factory that is now bankrupt.

One of the houses on the periphery of the property is a post office. Two others are empty, their innards charred, windows missing. Meshchersky has installed windows in his apartment in the fourth house, repaired wood-burning stoves and covered the ceiling with newspapers. He moved in because, under Russian law, to claim property you must live in it.

The Meshchersky name is well-known in the leather-bound annals of Russian nobility. A district and street in Moscow are named after the family. Yevgeny Meshchersky claims his ancestors fought in Russian armies for 800 years.

Meshchersky's grandfather was executed in 1937, during the height of Stalinist purges, for "harmful counterrevolutionary activities." The grandfather was officially rehabilitated in 1983 through a government decree that said his execution and the confiscation of his property were "groundless."

"This is the piece of paper you get in Russia in exchange for a lost life," Meshchersky said bitterly.

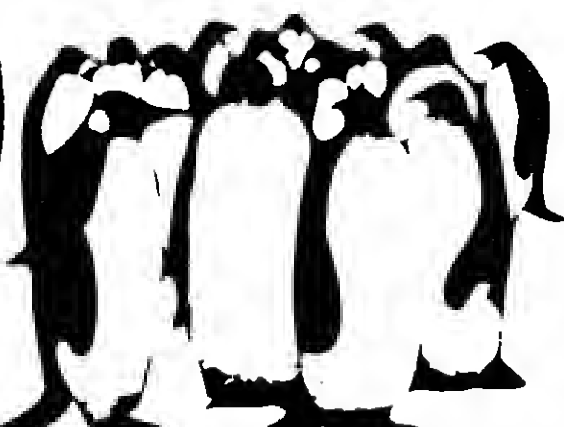
His wife, Lyudmila, takes a dim view of their prospects. "I came last year. I was surprised. I mean, no floor. No plumbing. Lonely at night. Everyone says the ghost of a princess haunts this place. I'm terrified."

Yet even for her, there is some romance. A rusty bayonet hangs on one of the walls.

She showed off a silver fork she found on the grounds with the monogram "A.M."—apparently an ancestor.

She also found an old brass pot. Meshchersky said that if you look closely at the surface, you can see his old coat of arms—a horseman, castle, bridge and pair of crescent moons. On this day the crest seemed invisible, and he rubbed and rubbed the surface to bring the emblem to light. "You can see it, if you look at the right angle," he said, and kept rubbing. ■

LA Times-Washington Times News Service

AROUND
TOWNLufthansa flies
to Jordan

A reception was held, Monday, at the Queen Alia International Airport, to celebrate the arrival of Lufthansa to Amman after a seven-year absence. The reception was attended by top dignitaries from Jordan and Germany. The airline has long had a travel agent in Amman. Attalah Kisek said he was very pleased that Lufthansa decided to re-establish its air-route to Jordan. (See page 6 for details.)



(From left) Tourism Minister Agel Belajji, Director-General of the Civil Aviation Authority Capt. Jasser Zayad, German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende.

Amman stage festival gives
variety the spice of life

Kofi Attah
Special to the Star

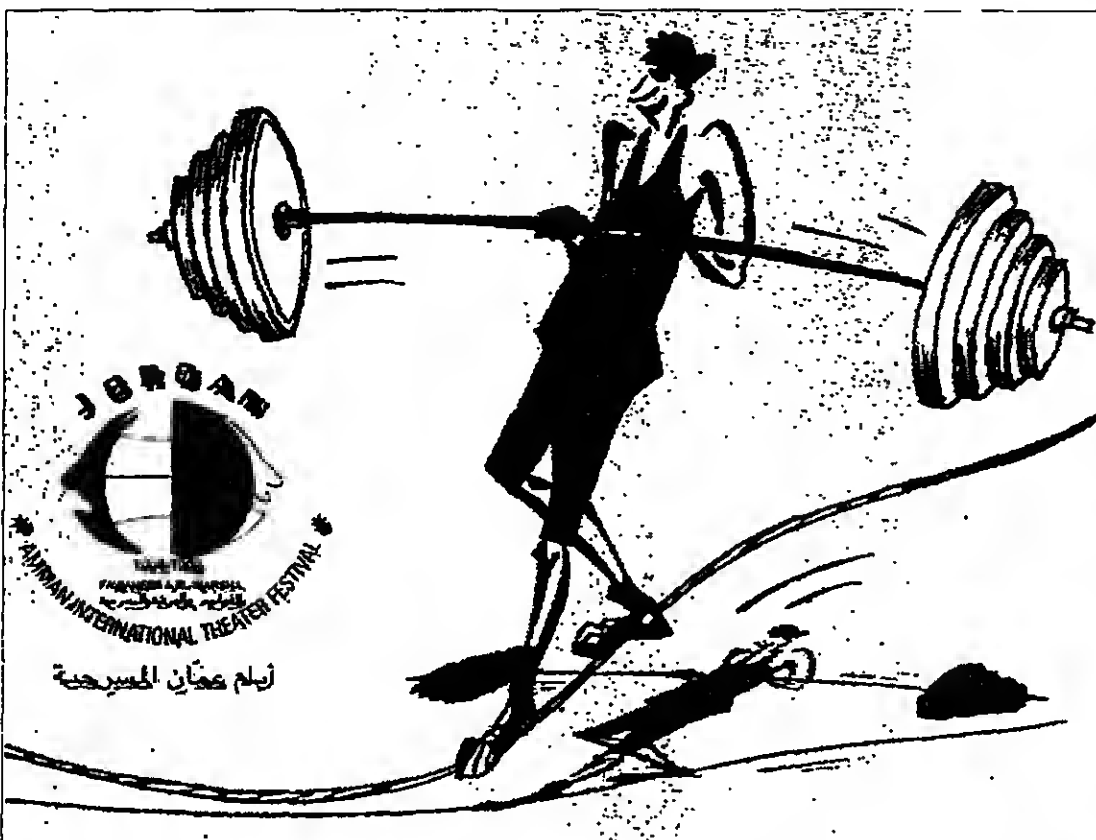
Watching a play is an experience that should be enjoyed by all. Jordanians understand this as well as anyone—witness the attendance at the opening performance of *The Memory of Three Boxes*, presented by the Greater Amman Municipality at the International Forum for Independent Theatre Troupes (5th Amman Theatre Days).

It's difficult to imagine a performance more engaging. Acted by Muhtasib Arif Zuheir Hasan and Najwa Qundugji, and directed by Sawzan Darwazah, the play portrays the life of three friends caught up in a complex web of living simultaneously in the present and a fast-fading past, which they all struggle to cling to. They are all faced with the difficult task of deciding whether to stick to the past or reshape their lives. In the end they find themselves living in doubt, fear and contradictions as they continue struggling to understand their roles in life.

The second day of the festival continued with *Death and the Maiden*, performed by Al Qasaba of Palestine. An adaptation of a play by Ariel Dorfman. It was prepared and directed by George Ibrahim, with Areen Omar Laila, Mohammed Bakr Jawal, Makram Khouri as well as other actors.

Allegorical in form, highly symbolic and violent in presentation, the play projected mistrust, betrayal and illusion. It was a conscience-raising parable that, though enlivened with humour, was fraught with deeply felt pain.

Of course, the drama of the festival sometimes extended beyond the stage. On Friday and Saturday nights, El Wacha of Egypt stole the show with *Spinning Lives*. The play attracted a



larger crowd than expected on both nights: tickets for the 130-seat Main Theatre were sold out long before curtain time. "I am trying to get a ticket from any available source, but so far I have failed," yelled desperate spectator Ahmad as he ran past me toward the door.

Those fortunate enough to get tickets were presented with a veritable theatrical feast. Although the presentation of *Spinning Lives* is predominantly one that relies on imagery, these dramatic symbols focus on the story line. "The closer we got in this play with our attempt to

find a dramatic equivalent to its story, the more we found ourselves attracted to seeking inspiration from the intensity of the characters and their relationships," noted the director.

Spinning Lives is an epic that sheds light on the life of Egyptian society. The actors keep moving emphatically, thus riveting audience attention. El Wacha actors, unlike many more 'standard' players, were not merely entertaining the crowd but exuberantly creating spaces through which the audience could critically analyze the images presented of changing Egyptian society.

The festival continues with more excellent performances, including *100 mobiles* a part 1 by ALIS of France, *Habit and Habit* by an Algerian troupe, in tribute to the sad events unfolding in that country. India is taking part for the first time this year, with *Khol Do*, a play portraying the riot that led to the partition of India. Palestinian drama is also a strong presence this year with three plays: *Al Mutashail*, *Jisr Ila Al Ahad* ("Bridge to Eternity"), and *Eed Qandeel*. There's even an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello*, performed by the Teatro Theatre of Tunisia.

In addition to the plays, a number of related seminars and workshops are being held. These include an Arab project meeting for theatre and arts; a seminar on musical theatre featuring Sweden's Beka; and another on child and youth theatre with the participation of SIDA, Sweden.

The International Forum for Independent Theatre remains right on target by bringing to those interested in following the development of this special manifestation of the performing arts solid performances of excellent plays. The festival will be finish up with a musical concert at the Main Theatre, Wednesday 5 April at 8:30 pm.

Paris avant-garde hits Amman

Anca de Maio
Special to the Star

AT THIS week's festival of independent theatre companies, the French duo ALIS struck a completely different note. Considered even in Paris an extreme expression of experimental theatre, ALIS stood out for its "radically" unconventional performance. To the public's astonishment, "100 mobiles a part 1" featured objects instead of actors in a plotless but stunning sequence of visual, light and sound effects. Rather a performance of magic tricks than a traditional theatre play, the show, proposed by Pierre Furry and Dominique Soria, with Christophe Gonçalves's technical assistance, had a philosophy of its own.

Convinced that being different is the core of any creative process, ALIS starts by demolishing all preconceived ideas about theatre. No need for a story and no need for characters any more. What do they use instead? Objects, images and

sounds, or—as they say in one word—"signs" meant to brainstorm first the conceivers and then the spectators.

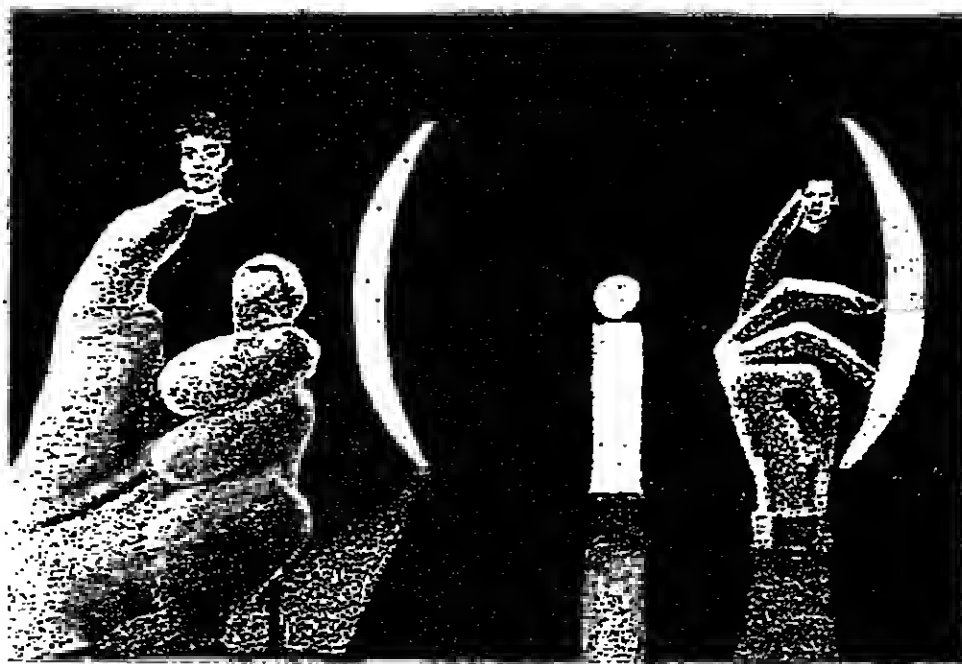
Almost invisible on the stage, the French couple give the main parts to a number of objects they made themselves out of cartoon, paper, plastic, posters, etc. Just like puppets or modest backstage workmen dressed in black, Furry and Soria enter the stage to show, handle and move around a surrealistic theatre set: huge white parentheses, life-size shapes of a man's and woman's upper bodies, symmetrically inverse letters "u" and "n", gigantic needles and hands, realistic images of an eagle, etc. The aim of their endless combinations of places, images and sounds (the letters of their name—ALIS—are actually initials for "association lieux, images and sons") is to simply "proliferate ideas" and not to "codify messages."

What counts is to flirt as long as possible with completely new things and situations. "We are inclined to stop

our ideas before discovering their meaning," said Furry. "We cease to elaborate on an idea before it turns into a message." Soria added, "We do not seek for certainties, but rather for tiny or unexpected events, for a sort of coincidence, that, even though minimal, can become spectacular."

To this end, light is used as a "rhythmic and pictorial element." The light effects and optical illusions generate immaterial architectures and fantastic depths. The stage magically turns into a "wonderland" where everything is possible: the words are replaced by images, the landscapes contemplate the onlooker, the TV sets watch the housewives iron, white becomes black, and the reverse. With ALIS the stage is "an investigative field" where the two magicians play their extraordinary machines and produce a precise sequence of unique effects.

Experimenting with the mechanism of poetry at the border between visual arts (photography, plastic art) and stage



arts (theatre, dance), ALIS invites the audience to open their minds and accept the phenomenon as a phenomenon.

Asking just for patience, the French company knows that what they propose can be surprising, confusing or even intimidating to the public. "That person who has never seen a theatre play could be our best spectator," insisted Furry, noting that the function of this type of show is to contradict preconceived ideas and expectations.

Their audience in Amman, at the Royal Cultural Centre, was probably more confused than that in Paris. Many of them felt frustrated at not having been able to grasp "the meaning behind," without realizing that there was not just one specific meaning to understand, but instead, something more like 100 fragments of ideas to contemplate.

One voice for nature

THE ROYAL Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) visited Hotel InterContinental Jordan to update the management on the three animals the hotel adopted in December. They handed the Executive Assistant Manager of the Hotel, Mr Kees Heuveling the adoption certificate.

As part of the Twelve days before Christmas activities the Hotel adopted three endangered animals, an Ibis, an Ostrich and a Gazelle.

Hotel InterContinental Jordan is the first company in Jordan to adopt animals. Heuveling was briefed on the activities of the RSCN.

He thanked the Society's Management and emphasized the importance of working together to create environmental awareness among people working in the tourism industry.

New offers provided
by Radisson SAS
Jordan

LAST WEEK, members of the management teams of the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman and the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba held a meeting to finalize preparations for a new Rewards Program. The Breakaway Plus Rewards Program will be introduced to all companies in Jordan organizing meetings and conferences or receiving business guests from abroad. "After the extensive renovations of our properties in Amman and Aqaba and with the introduction of the Royal Club concept at the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman, we now feel fully ready to host discerning business travellers visiting Jordan," says Lawrence Steeman, Director of Sales & Marketing. "The Breakaway Plus Rewards Program is our way of saying thank you to everyone entrusting their conferences and guests to our hotels in the future," he adds.



(From left) Basel Talal, Front Office Manager at Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba, Felix Houser, Manager at the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba, Adel Amin, Director of Sales, Radisson SAS Hotel Amman.

SCRAPBOOK

By Stephen Ellis

Technology of the living soul

TECHNOLOGY: WHAT is it? We know it primarily as a means of transmitting information, but what exactly is the information, and what do we do with it?

American poet Al Young, in a talk last week to a large and receptive audience at the American Embassy, discussed these questions and provided several points of view, if not any ultimate answers.

Young dealt with his topic creatively, relating his wonder at watching his father listen to a recording of *Body and Soul* repeatedly (a rehearsal he said was toward "shaping a mind picture of our common world"). He read from his own work, sang an occasional chorus from a couple of old jazz standards, and humorously noted that Adolphe Sax, inventor of the saxophone, had "forbidden negroes to play his instrument"—an irony not lost on Young, a black and professional musician.

His talk revolved around the relationships between poetry, story-telling and technology. He began his presentation with the observation that modern society is driven by what he called "archive and text"—what we get from the computer.

Noting that "as a society believes, so does it behave," Young briefly dissected the rise of the "textual and archival," pushing it back to the 17th century belief that "the world was fully explicable, and that we therefore have the right to objectify everything we come into contact with."

But this kind of thinking diminishes creative potential; explanation tends to diminish active participation. "Worshipping technical innovation," Young pointed out, "results in an imagination that is dulled: your life is already on TV." This inactivity is ultimately destructive—to the environment, to society, to ourselves.

As an alternative, Young emphasized the value of poetry and story-telling: "It is the light on the dirt of the things of this world that astonishes the poet as a boy." He noted that the development of this "astonishment" involved what he called "mythologizing"—a way of using the imagination to produce a world which one "co-creates" with the actual one they're in.

Young emphasized that the most primary human activity was the exchange of information orally between individuals. Only in this way can the "visceral, emotional element" of human life maintain itself against the overwhelming availability of systematized information.

The ability to shape this "visceral" material, into music, story or poem is what Young defined as "soul"—a way of being actively in the world rather than merely before it. He cited a study that showed that young people, due to screen technology, have difficulty with metaphorical thinking—the ability to comprehend a problematic situation, to think about it analogically and to "complete" it by finding a variety of solutions that immediately apply, yet also lead elsewhere; to the astonishment of what the imagination may find itself capable of.

AGENDA

Amman
International
Theater Festival

Schedule for 4/2-4/5

At Main Theater, 8 pm
April 2—*Khol Do*, performed by a theater group from India

April 3/4—*Othello*, by El Teatro theater (Tunisia).
April 5—closing ceremony; musical concert

At Ronnd Theater, 7:30 pm
April 2—*Another Bullet At Bernarda Alba's House*. Al Fawanees (Jordan)
April 3/4—*Jisr Ila Al Abad*, Theater Day (Palestine)

At Osam Al Mashini Theater, 6 pm
April 3—*The Island*, Theater for All (Palestine)
April 4/5—Al Mutassif, dramatic reading

Admission to all performances is JD 4.
Schedules for seminars and workshops will be announced daily in the Festival Newsletter.
For further details on times and locations, please telephone 5624413.

Films
■ Upcoming at the French Cultural Center, a Luis Bunuel film festival, beginning 6 April with *La fièvre a El Pao* and continuing with *Le*

charme discret de la bourgeoisie on 13 April; *Le fantome de la liberte* on 20 April; and closing with *Cet obscur objet du desir* on 27 April. All showings at 6:30 and 8:30 pm at the French Cultural Center

■ At Instituto Cervantes (near 3rd Circle, behind the InterContinental Hotel):

April 2—Pedro Almodovar film, *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios* (Women On the Edge of a Nervous Breakdown), 5 pm
April 4—*Beltenebros*, an homage to Pilar Miró II, 5 pm
April 5—*Hella Hemingway*, a Cuban film subtitled in English, 5 pm

Exhibitions
■ Exhibition of home appliances, clothing, perfume and sweets (marking the advent of 'Eid Al Adha) at the University of Jordan until April 7.
■ Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street, until April 25.

Lectures
■ "Orientalism and Post Modernism" by PhD candidate Paul Heck, 2 April Fulbright House, Shmeisani, at 4 pm. Sponsored by the American Language Center.

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV from 4 - 10 April

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY
4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—The Hammerman
4:30—French Program
5:00—Canon The Adventurer
6:00—Square One TV
6:30—Neighbors
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovery Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism
9:10—Sirens
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Across the Tracks*, starring: Brad Pitt, Annie Dylan
12:00—Are You Being Served?

SUNDAY
4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—French Program
6:00—Skippy
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—America's Funniest
8:00—People and Places in Africa
8:30—The Ultimate Guide to Motherhood
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—North and South
11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY
4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—French Program
6:00—Riding High
6:30—Neighbors
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope And Gloria
8:00—Perspective
8:30—American Chart Show



The Ultimate Guide to Motherhood, Sunday at 8:30 pm

9:10—Marker
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law & Order
11:10—Baywatch Nights

TUESDAY
4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—CRO
4:30—French Program
6:00—Small Talk
6:30—Border Town
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs

7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Pride and Joy
8:00—What Would You Do
8:30—Encounter
9:10—Acapulco Bay
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Metro Café

WEDNESDAY
4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Mr. Bogus
4:30—French Programs
6:00—Oliver Twist

Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): Stallone in "Daylight"
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): "Major Payne"
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): Titanic
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Titanic
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): Risala Ila Al Wali (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Long Kiss Goodnight

6:30—Neighbors
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Campus Cops
8:00—The Health Show
8:30—Timeswatch
9:10—King Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Women on the Run

THURSDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—The Dinky Di's
2:30—The Animal Show
3:00—French Programs
5:00—NBA
6:00—The Burned Bridge
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Great Romance
8:30—Lois & Clark
8:30—Dr Quinn The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Never the Twain

FRIDAY
2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
2:30—Wishbone
3:00—French Programs
5:00—He Shoots, He Scores
5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
6:00—Tarzan
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S.
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Album Show
9:10—Adventures of Brisco County
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Drama

12:00—Almost Home

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI
16:30—Arsène Lupin
17:00—Cajou
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œil de Colomb

DIMANCHE
16:30—Les plus petits
17:00—Magazine
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI
16:30—Un bon petit diable
17:00—Thalassa
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine scientifique Cinq sur cinq

MARDI
16:30—Un bon petit diable
17:00—Savoir plus santé
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—De cause à effet

MERCREDI
16:30—Un bon petit diable
17:00—Usbna
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

JEUDI
15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Sous vos applaudissements
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—A l'heure crochus

VENDREDI
15:00—Qui est qui
15:30—Julie Lescaut
19:00—Le Journal

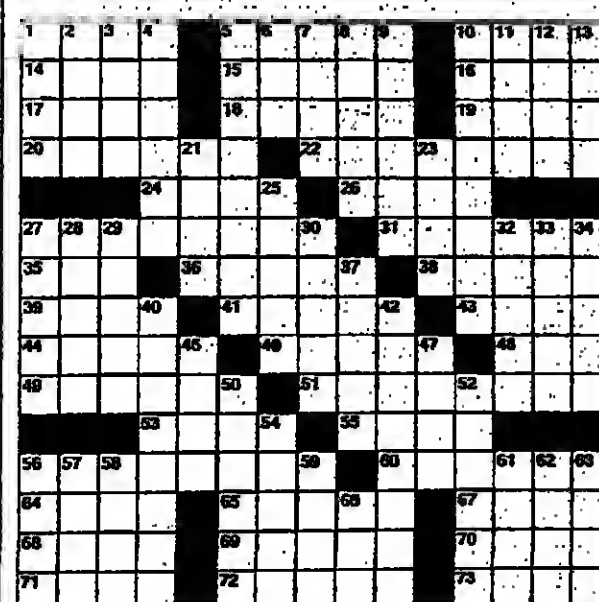
Programs are subject to change by JTV

MUSIC



Madonna opened the 48th San Remo festival with her new single "Frozen" from her new release album "Ray of Light"

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS**
1 Loud noise
5 Idolize
10 State of unconsciousness
14 American author, James
15 Garden arbor
16 Tel
17 Clay on the Acre
18 Be angry
19 Chest sound
20 Devilish
22 Threat holders
24 Woe is me!
27 Fiches
31 Glossy paint
35 United
38 Chews persistently
39 To form perfect union
39 Type of type, abbr.
- DOWN**
2 Asparagus
3 Placardous bird
4 Mire
6 Composer
8 Assistance
9 Positively
51 Gators and crocs
53 off (Latin)
55 ill-humored
56 Aurora
60 Hidden gunman
64 Hedge to restrain
65 Medium or small
68 Scrammy
69 Exotic joy in
70 Pardon c
71 Make a meet
72 Units of force
73 Hiding kin
- ACROSS**
30 Curse
32 Upright
33 Ford or Kovacs
34 Yorkshire city
37 Glutted
40 Podia
42 Inclusive rapies
45 Flightless bird
47 Virgin
49 Squealed
50 Spring blooms
54 One
56 Tree trunk
57 Yoked
58 Understand
59 Corny
61 Kind of helmet
62 Pound
63 Primitive wind instrument
66 Corroded

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—THIS WEEK'S—
HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is going from Pisces, which favors actors and musicians, into Aries, which favors athletes. Figure out which category you fit into and you'll know which side of the week will be easier.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Money management is your major theme. Travel is almost good, but it looks like there are complications.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Team up with a friend to improve your chances of success. Move quickly to get the best deal.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Organize family and co-workers to solve a community problem. By working together, you can clean things up and make it safe for everyone.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Provide what's needed to push an older person to success. Your attention could make all the difference.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). This is a very lucrative phase for you. There's money coming in. Stick close to home.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're so powerful that you're beginning to draw attention. You make things look easy.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You know what you ought to be doing, so start putting in the correction. Give money to a partner for something that will benefit you both.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're a very strong leader. You'll motivate the whole team to perform beyond their own expectations.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Keep most of what you know to yourself. The odds of being misunderstood or misinterpreted are way too high.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Collaborate with friends to master a difficult subject. You'll inspire each other to be magnificent.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll have to do as you're told, but the rewards could be quite generous. Turn it down anyway, if it's illegal.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). A foreign contact should bring the money you need. Get a highly organized person to help you with a difficult assignment.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: It looks like you'll get to travel this year, possibly on business. There's money associated with far distant places and it's coming into your account.

Bridge

First Things First

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♠ J6

♥ A872

♦ A72

♣ A754

WEST

♠ Q743

♥ Q6

♦ J105

♣ KQJ8

SOUTH

♠ AK1095

♥ K9

♦ Q8643

♣ 6

The bidding:

North East South West

1♣ Pass 1♠ Pass

1NT Pass 3♣ Pass

3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠

The winner of the \$40,000 first prize in the inaugural Omar Sharif World Individual event some years ago was the peripatetic Zia Mahmood. He edged into first place on the last board of the event when an opponent revoked on a crucial trick, permitting an unmakeable contract to stand.

Zia held the South cards in a recent rubber-bridge game. Note North's false preference to three spades. The hand was better suited to play in a suit unless South bid three no trump next.

When you hold a long side suit, it is usually correct to establish that suit before drawing trumps to protect against losing control. Also, how many tricks you have to lose on the side might determine how trumps should be tackled.

After winning the first trick with dummy's ace of clubs, declarer resisted the temptation of taking the trump finesse in favor of leading a low diamond toward the queen. East rose with the king of diamonds and returned a club, forcing declarer to ruff. When both defenders followed to the ace of diamonds, declarer cashed two high trumps in hand and then started running red-suit winners. West could score two trump tricks, but the defenders were limited to three tricks in total.

Observe that, had declarer taken the spade finesse at trick two, the contract would probably have foundered. The defenders could force declarer twice with clubs, causing South to lose control of the hand.

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

URPPE

SUPIO

FLUNGE

COATEL

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE OLD COLLEGE TRIP

Answer: What the three-sport athlete gave his school -

ANSWERS: UPPER PIOUS ENIGMA LOCATE



Would You Believe...

For those who can't do without their morning cup of coffee, remember that coffee wasn't introduced to Europe until the 16th century. People somehow did without for thousands of years before then.

Speaking of late developments, France did not discontinue use of the guillotine for executions until the 20th century.

Think it's rainy where you live? San Juan, Puerto Rico's average rainfall for the month of October is 5.71 inches.

One of Jupiter's moons, Io, is the only other planet or moon aside from Earth that is known to have active volcanic eruptions.

There are about 80 known species of rats in the world.

Agnes Bashir
Musical impressions
from the Orient

By Anca de Maio

Special to The Star

MELODIOUS AND deeply Arabic, Agnes Bashir's music kept the audience spellbound in a unique concert the pianist performed with the Orchestra of the National Music Conservatory of Amman last Sunday at Jordan University. The performance marked the first time exclusively Arab symphonic music was presented in Amman. Going straight to the heart of the people, the Arabic spirit of her composition was a pleasant surprise to those that were unaware that Agnes Bashir was a prestigious composer of Oriental music, in addition to being a talented pianist and piano teacher at the Conservatory of Music.

"Agnes Bashir's music was absolutely fabulous," said a young Jordanian who attended the concert. "I did not know we had such a talented composer in our midst." Timmie, 25, continued.

"What I liked best was her 'Arabic Suite,'" she said. "While listening to the music, I imagined a sunrise in the desert and dancers at a traditional feast."

"The song interpreted by Palestinian soprano Tania Tamari Nasir impressed me a lot, maybe because the music is such a perfect echo of the lyrics," said Lina, 34, of Lebanese origin. "One does not need to know the language in order to understand what the song says," she pointed out. "This is also valid for the 'Song for Peace' that was chorally interpreted at the end of the concert."

"I can very clearly recognize our folkloric music in it," said a pupil from the Al Ahlia School for Girls. "I do not know how a piece like 'In Jordan' sounds to you, but I believe one must be raised in our culture to fully understand it," she added.

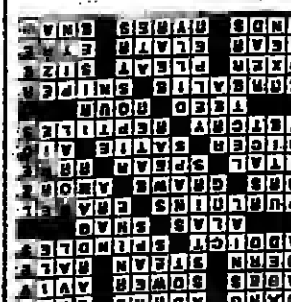
Agnes Bashir has been living in the Arab world since 1967. Although she was born in Georgia and educated in Moscow, with time she has come to feel the Eastern culture as if it were her own. "I am fascinated by Arab culture and civilization," she stressed, adding that she started to compose music inspired by Arab traditions in Iraq in the 1980s with the aim of "demonstrating the great potential of the Oriental musical heritage." Quoting the famous Egyptian conductor Salim Sahad, the composer said, "As Europeans have been teaching us to love Western music, why shouldn't it be our turn now to teach them to love our music?"

Last Sunday's concert was a tremendous success thanks to the fine interpretation of Orchestra of the National Conservatory and its conductor Mohammad Othman Sidiq. The 62 musicians of the orchestra (all faculty members and advanced students of the Conservatory) began rehearsals for the performance more than one month ago. "We had to replace certain instruments which were not available in Jordan with others we already had in the Orchestra," explained Ms Bashir. "The collective wish to perform the music in mid-March helped us to overcome any objective shortcomings," she said with satisfaction. Given the more-than-positive response of the public, the concert will very likely be repeated soon.



Bashir

Cruelty isn't
softened by
tears; it feeds
on them.



SOLUTION

Czech struggle for national identity

By Tony Barber

IT WAS Friedrich Engels who, in 1849, contemptuously dismissed the Czech people as an "historically absolutely non-existent nation" who "have never had a history of their own." And in September 1938, Neville Chamberlain expressed much the same thought with only marginally less insensitivity when he described Czechoslovakia as "a far away country" inhabited by "people of whom we know nothing."

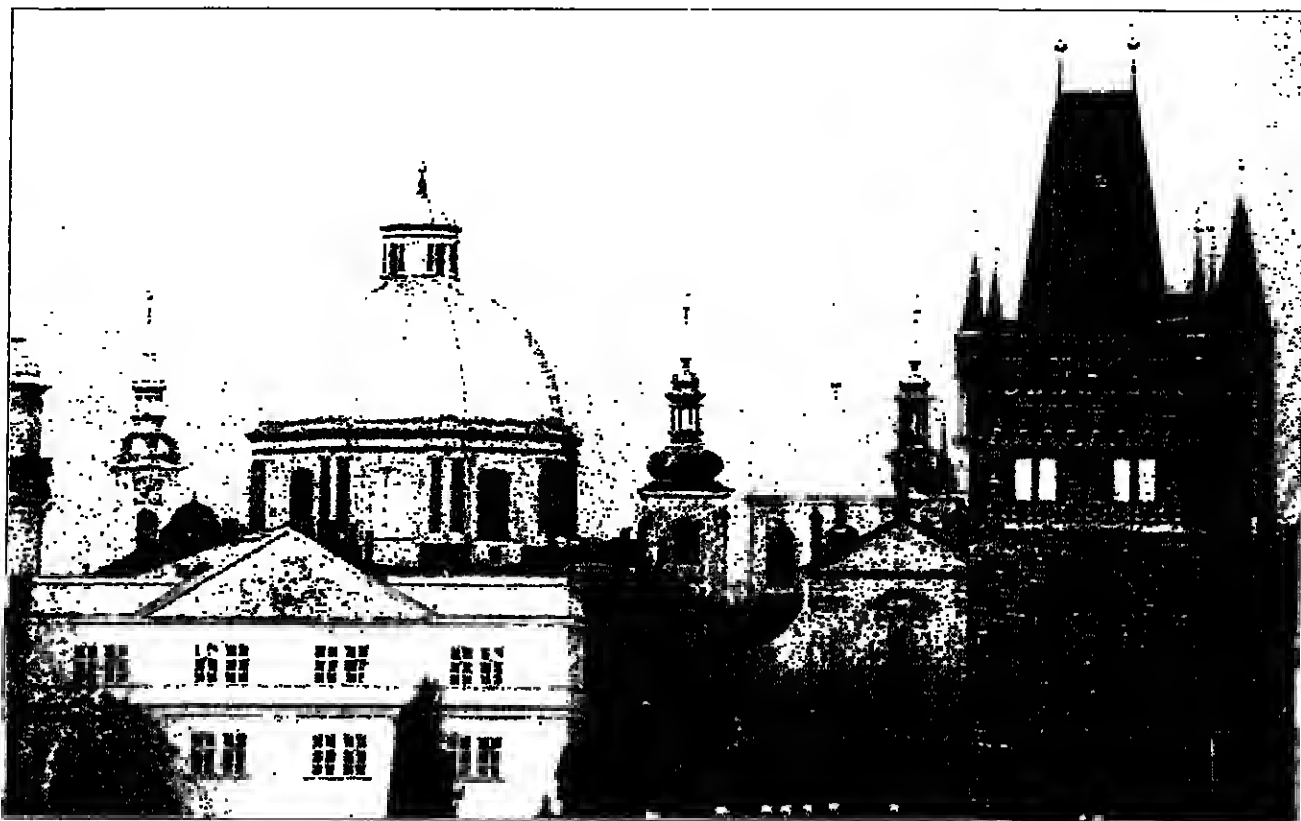
Derek Sayer's book, a history of the Czechs since their conversion to Christianity in the ninth century, serves as a thoroughly effective rebuttal to Engels and a stern post factum rebuke to Chamberlain.

Written rather more from a cultural than a political perspective, the book notes that the greatest-ever Czech reference work, a 28-volume encyclopedia published between 1888 and 1909, was in its day, in terms of numbers of entries and illustrations, second only to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The common Czech greeting, "nazdar!", derives from the expression "Na zdar Narodního divadla" ("To the success of the National Theatre"), a campaign slogan which ensured that this monument to the nation's cultural identity, opened in 1881, was paid for entirely by public donations.

Czech culture has rarely been heavy and impenetrable. The national opera, Bedřich Smetana's *Bartered Bride*, at one point extols the virtues of Czech beer. An 1826 best-seller, Magdalena Rettigova's *Home Cakes*, or *A Treatise on Meat Dishes for Daughters of Bohemia and Moravia*, "was to the Czech kitchen what Mrs Beeton was to the 19th century English or *The Joy of Cooking* to the 20th century American."

Beer, pork and dumplings: Jaroslav Hasek's *Good Soldier Švejk* would certainly recognize these make to Czech life. But this is also a country where a quarter of a million people



Out of the past and into the future: remnants of early Czech empire. St. Francis of Assisi Church, Prague

attended the 1939 re-burial in Prague of Karel Hynek Macha, the founder of modern Czech poetry, who had died 103 years earlier at the age of 25. Coming as it did two months after Hitler's final dismemberment of the inter-war Czechoslovak state, this solemn commemoration was a poignant act of public bravery.

Not that it spared the Czechs. Pre-war Prague, a fascinating mixture of Czech, German and Jewish influences, was shattered by Nazi occupation and communist dictatorship. "The Germans murdered the Jews, the Czechs expelled the Germans, and the communists did their utmost to obliterate the very memory of both."

But they could not obliterate the Czechs' pride in their past. As Sayer illustrates, and as Engels and Chamberlain should have known, the Czechs

were responsible for constructing one of Europe's most advanced medieval polities. Under Charles IV (1346-78), Prague was the Holy Roman Empire's capital and home to one of Europe's oldest universities.

Yet one can understand why, despite their location at the geographical heart of Europe, the Czechs have all too often been on the fringes of European consciousness. For all but 20 years between 1620, the year of the great national disaster at the Battle of White Mountain, and 1899, the year of liberation from communism, the Czechs were under the thumb of Vienna, Berlin or Moscow. Czech as a written language virtually died out during the three centuries of Austrian Hapsburg domination, from 1620 to 1918. The authorities in Vienna banned almost

all Czech literature from the "golden age" of the 15th century, when the Hussite national-religious rebellion had presaged the Lutheran Reformation by a century.

For the Czechs, the calamity was that their national identity depended crucially on their language. "Much that had thus far defined Czech history, and made Czechs who they were, could not be spoken of."

Even as late as 1871, when the Czech national revival was getting into full swing, the Prague Statistical Commission made the observation that the 1851 census-takers had been premature in trying to identify people by nationality because "a clear consciousness of national identity among the majority of Austro-Hungarian nations was, so to speak, still in raptures."

Sayer concludes that the

Czech people have been victims of their unfortunate position on the dividing line between several opposed, political and cultural worlds: Protestant and Catholic, German and Slav, capitalist and communist, democratic and totalitarian.

Nor does he seem entirely confident that Czech history will have a "happy ending." Today's Czech Republic is a young democracy poised to join NATO and the European Union, apparent milestones on the road to permanent integration into the western world.

Yet the temptation to portray the Czech past as one long national pilgrimage from Jan Hus to Vaclav Havel should be resisted. If history were that simple, there would be no need for books as discerning and thought-provoking as Sayer's.

Financial Times Syndication

'Newton Boys' too nice to be bad Dullards with guns on horseback

By Stephen Hunter

"THE NEWTON BOYS" is less a movie than a tale that might be told by some good old Texans sitting on the porch at night, listening to the crickets while they pass the jug around, somewhere west of Amarillo. It trickles and moseys about in its own good time, punctuated by guffaws and thigh-slapping and the occasional eyehall-blasting jolt from the white lightning, but never really manages to achieve the formal status of "story."

The tale it tells is true, but has never been told before. Hmmm—could there be a reason, do you suppose?

There were four Newton brothers. Willis, Joe, Jess and Dock, Texas cowboys and farmhands, who decided in 1919 that existence atop a horse or crouched under cotton plant No. 4568 in a field of 12,008 cotton plants wasn't exactly the lifestyle of the rich and famous. Plus, it was hard on the back.

So instead they opened a bank robbery franchise, stealing millions over the next few years, losing most of it in the few holes in Texas that didn't have oil at the bottom. They went about their business mostly at night, blowing off the doors of safes and fleeing with the loot.

Bonnie and Clyde or Johnny Dillinger and his pal Baby Face weren't, which is perhaps why their reputations languished. They were more like slacker crooks, who never meant anybody any harm, never killed a soul and rarely had to pull their guns. So right away you see the problem: It's a story without much drama. I mean, how exciting is it when the 10th safe blows up?

Director-screenwriter Richard Linklater—he did "Dazed and Confused" and "Before Sunrise"—hopes to substitute beauty for drama and charm for excitement. Willis, the dominant member and "brains" (the term is used advisedly) behind the group, is meant to embody both. He's played by Matthew McConaughey, that statuesque native Texan whom somebody has declared a movie star, presumably the same person who declared Gwyneth Paltrow one, too.

McConaughey is a young man who goes about behind Paul Newman's face while spouting his lines in Audie Murphy's voice. And his Willis is the charming one, a con man and angle mechanic, slick as 10W-40 oil. McConaughey may commit some actual acting in the performance, something he hasn't been called on to do before. But the character only goes so

far, and no farther, and when he's teamed, for romantic fizz, with the gal of his dreams—played at high drone by Julianna Margulies—you're thinking: Whose bright idea was this?

The film lacks a drive shaft. One would think that a story of bank robbers would be constructed as a pursuit, and would draw suspense off the cat-and-mouse games between the law and the robbers.

But there is no pursuit, so there's no cat-and-mouse: there's only mouse and mouse as brother Joe (Skeet Ulrich) betrays quivers of conscience while brother Jess (Ethan Hawke, his delicate sensitivity, as well as his performance, lost behind a ten-gallon hat and a handlebar mustache) tries to pick up gals. And where is all this action set? Why, in the last of the red-hot-mama towns, wide-open and crazed Omaha. (Yes, I agree: This is the best film ever set in Omaha.)

If there's any pursuit of these not-so-had boys, it's represented by the old Peckinpah regular Bo Hopkins, his hair dyed inexplicably blond, as a particularly avuncular FBI agent. And what FBI was that? It sure wasn't the FBI that produced Melvin Purvis and gunned-down Dillinger and Baby Face. This is an FBI of genteel old gentlemen in Colonel Sanders suits who are wryly amused at everything.

Toward the end, the thing picks up a hit. A Toronto job turns violent—nobody is killed but several are pistol-whipped, and Linklater thinks this is amusing rather than grotesque, but the sequence at least crackles. And soon enough the boys are trying their hands at a big last job, a Chicago train heist. Again the movie stirs, particularly when well-laid plans go astray, and one brother catches a faceful of bullets as various law enforcement agents are closing in.

But generally, "The Newton Boys" just wends and pokes. And it may be too Texas-y for its own good. It loves that particular kind of Texas needing and joshing between the brothers, and their subtle Texas superiority to various other Midwesterners.

It even evokes the great Texas Ranger Frank Hamer with a knowing wink to the exactly two people in the audience who know who he is. It's a movie for, by and about Texas, made by Texans, in Texas (they never went to Omaha or Toronto or Chicago). Death and Texas may be unavoidable, but you do not have to see "The Newton Boys" unless you want to. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Who wears what for who?

Designers compete to clothe starlets

By Mimi Avins

HOLLYWOOD — "The inmates are running the asylum," a veteran fashion publicist said at a pre-Oscar luncheon, describing the style derby the Academy Awards has become. In the past few years, the media have eagerly criticized designers for "besieging" defenseless actresses, begging them to wear their dresses. But for every tale of designers who litter a performer's doorstep with boxes of free clothes in situation most women wouldn't really define as a problem, there are rumors of actresses who grossly abuse the privileges their positions afford them.

In a year when an extravagantly romantic movie dominated the awards, it would be tempting to see the potentially passionate activity of choosing a special gown as an affair of the heart. We imagine a designer is swept away by an actress's beauty and creates a dress just for her. Or an actress is so moved by a designer's vision that she experiences the peculiar ecstasy of love at first sight—a lesser thrill when the object of affection is a dress, not a man, but a high, nevertheless.

That's how it would work if life were a movie. In reality, Oscar night fashions are as businesslike as a pre-nup. A designer commits time, money and effort to dressing a star in exchange for international exposure. Get out your calculators. A page of advertising in *Vogue* would cost X and be seen by Y people. Making clothes for Z actresses and employing U publicists to tend to their needs, on the chance that V dresses will be photographed and seen by 80 billion people, is worth W, squared. A designer does the math and makes an economic decision to invest in the Oscar market, or not.

Donatella Versace decided to try. She opted not to present a couture collection in Paris in January but did create four gowns, sending them out on the runway during the men's shows that month. Then she directed the craftspeople in the Versace workrooms to make 20 lace, chain mail, mesh and headband fantasies, just for Oscar consideration.

In February, publicist Elizabeth Harrison camped in a suite at the Chateau Marmont with the gowns and invited actresses to try them on. The names on her call sheet were a beginner's guide to the event's pecking order.

"We don't want to dress just anyone," she explained then. "We want to dress the right people."

Well, join the club. The competition was fierce for nominated actresses and the presenters, those most likely to be on camera or repeatedly photographed. Many actresses don't have the perfect figures of models, so it's a given that the more glamorous the girl, the more sought-after she is.

"I'd love to see Kim Basinger in one of these gowns," Harrison said. "Celine Dion would look great in a number of them." Basinger and Dion would look good to bath towels. But chubbettes and wives of actors and directors are less in demand, unless the wife in question is "Terminator" superstar and James Cameron spouse Linda Hamilton. The situation

might seem as cruel as a high school clique, but only if you forget that it's just business as usual.

The week before the awards, New Yorker Harrison was at the Four

Seasons in Beverly Hills, with her rack of Versaces, coordinated shoes and bags, and a seamstress ready to do alterations.

At the hotel, where even a celebrity eyebrow plucker had booked a suite and was lining up beauties in need of a tweeze, rumors flew that actresses were making last-minute decisions from stockpiles of dresses—including several made just for them.

"Minnie Driver has 25 gowns to choose from, and she can't make up her mind because she's overwhelmed," one publicist said. "With 25 designer gowns, who wouldn't be overwhelmed?"

A non-celebrity could understand the kind of pressure an actress feels on Oscar night by thinking about her wedding day. All eyes will be on her, and she'll be photographed for posterity. No wonder she gets insecure about what to wear.

Stylists are supposed to guide a decision.

"I wasn't even in town," Ashley Judd said Monday night. "So I just left it to my stylist, and she sent me things to try." But there was grumbling that powerful stylists were making things worse. Benie, moenie, minie, moe. The Richard Tyler gets to go.

And the Versace verdict? Claudia Schiffer, Lisa Rinna and Melanie Griffith wore Versace on that Monday night, as did a few lesser-known actresses. None were nominees or were presenters. Better luck next year. And remember, it's just business. ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The Star Sports

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adzazi

Marathon set to run its course

THE 6TH Annual Amman Dead Sea Ultra Marathon takes place Friday morning, 3 April, beginning from Seventh Circle in Amman at 6:30 am. The course will take runners to the lowest point on earth in support of charity—specifically The Society for the Care of Neurological Patients, in cooperation with Amman Road Runners. The final number of participants will not be finalized until Thursday evening, so there is still time for interested parties to sign up. Preparations for the big race are set, according to Khadeja Mohsen, an organizing committee spokeswoman—traffic control, medical care in case of emergencies, and most importantly, twelve water stations placed strategically along the route. The race, held under the patronage of HRH Prince Raad Ben Zeid, is being sponsored by 41 local companies. HRH Prince Firas has said he wants the race to achieve international status, comparable to the New York or Boston marathons. To date, participants number 160 Jordanian and expatriate athletes living in Jordan with an additional 20 runners from outside the country. ■



Malone Vows Run and Gun Defense

By Alan Greenberg

LARRY BIRD said he received death threats so often during his playing days, he stopped reporting them, or even paying attention. So the recent news that Karl Malone received a death threat while his Jazz were playing the Nets in New Jersey shouldn't come as a shock.

Death threats, unfortunately, are often a grisly part of being famous. What was shocking was Malone saying he will take appropriate actions to protect himself. Malone said security at some NBA games is lax and he's not going to wait for a disaster to happen. "I've got a concealed weapons permit," Malone said. "We fly char-

ter, and I'm going to start carrying a gun on the road with me, right now, no question. I'm going to protect myself. From now on, I'll be packing. I'm not going to be one of those oh-guys."

Malone's comments would be comical if the subject weren't so serious. What's he going to do, carry a derringer in his waistband and play with one eye on the stands? Malone is right. Security is lax at most games. And while a Guenter Pache copycat would seem to be risking his own dismemberment by running onto the court with a knife, only metal detectors at each entrance or surrounding the court with bulletproof glass would seem to ensure the players' safety from a gun-

toing yahoo.

"When public figures mingle with the public, security is always a concern. But given their multimillion dollar salaries, pro athletes can afford to hire bodyguards when they venture out in public. Many do. But in the arena, just as on a Broadway stage or at a concert, every performer is at risk. I've been carrying a gun for the past 10 years," Rockets forward Charles Barkley said. "I just feel safer with it. But I don't think you need it on the road. You just have to trust security then. I think anybody who wants to get you is going to get you anyway."

LA Times-washington Post News Service

Princess prepares for Sydney 2000 Riding the track of champions

By Abdul Hamid Adzazi
Special to The Star

HER ROYAL Highness Princess Haya Sunday completed participation in the 12-nation Zurich International Equestrian Tournament. The contest was comprised of the 36 best riders from 11 countries, including Great Britain, Ireland, Holland, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Canada, Brazil and USA.

Her final competition on Sunday was quite a success when she got the 19th position with the Belgium rider Ludo Philippes.

Princess Haya participated in three tough competitions in the tournament against such great riders as Austrian Hugo Simon, the world champion, and Germany's Olympic champion.

Her competition on Sunday was a bit of a tragedy, when her horse balked at the obstacle in the speed competition in which 49 top seeded champions also took part.

"It was natural to withdraw, especially since the track was designed for world champions rather than a princess come from Jordan," she smiled.

Top-ranked Austrian Hugo Simon, World Cup title holder, and Britain's European champion Michael Whitaker were also eliminated. Participants had to clear 12 obstacles of 140 centimeters each. Germany's Marcus Mirshvorn finished first with a time of 54.72 seconds.

Success brings success

Clearly, the participation of Princess Haya was a big success and will likely have a positive effect on future competitions. She faced the world's champions and has learned how to compete on an international level. She has received an invitation to participate in Lucerne Tournament—which will take place June 4-7—as well as in 40 other European competitions this year.

Towards Sydney 2000

Princess Haya considered the recent competition as a stage in her preparations for the next Pan Arab Games—



to be held in Amman in 1999—and also for the Olympics planned for Sydney in 2000.

"I am not participating in any competition which presents an obstacle to my ambitious program for Sydney 2000," she said.

Because of that, she began an intensive regimen for three years, eating only salads, cheese and chicken, running 3 times a day and, with the help of a special doctor, preparing psychologically for the competition.

Other successes in Zurich

The Ministry of Tourism organized the Jordanian wing of the exhibition held on the sidelines of the tournament. The exhibits aimed at marketing the Kingdom internationally and promoting interest in its archaeological sites. The exhibits were attended by 10,607 visitors, breaking the previous record of 10,450. In addition, the mounted Badia police and folklore troupe Ya Hala presented several dazzling performances relating to Jordanian culture. ■

British Ambassador's Cup Friday

The "British Ambassador's Cup" Golf Tournament starts Friday at 9 am at the Bahrain Golf Club. Forty-four of the leading golfers in Amman, both Jordanians and expatriates from business, government and diplomatic sectors, will be participating. After the tournament lunch will be served and prizes will be given to winners.

The British Ambassador, who himself will play in the match, will be presenting the cup to the winner of the tournament, and prizes and lunch will be presented by some organizations which offered to sponsor the event, such as La Meridian Hotel, British Airways and the British Bank. Her Royal Highness Princess Muha will assist in presenting the prizes. ■

Brazilian 'dream team' in midst of nightmare

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil—Somewhere on the road to the World Cup, the Brazilian juggernaut broke down. Barely a year ago, the four-time world champions were steamrolling adversaries in the best tradition of Brazilian "art soccer." Coach Mario Zagallo described it as "the soccer of dreams."

But recently, Brazil has struggled against soccer minor leaguers like Guatemala and Jamaica. Goal scorers can't find the net. Playmakers lack inspiration. Art soccer has turned ugly.

Zagallo, whose job seemed as secure as the pope's, is under pressure to show improvement in upcoming exhibition games against powerful Germany and Argentina. Local media already are speculating on his replacement if he fails. Alarmed at the team's slump, the Brazilian Soccer Confederation this month named former All-Star Zico as coordinator, counselor and aide—help that Zagallo had long said he didn't need.

Of course, Brazilians set impossibly high standards. They expect not only victory, but an "ole" every game. The team has been No. 1 in FIFA's world rankings for four years and remains a favorite to win its fifth World Cup in France. And with a front line of Romario and Rivaldo, how bad can it be?

Still, for a team that pledged to revive Brazil's samba-soccer school after the drudge-like performance of 1994, its recent play has been disappointing. Problems were apparent during the Confederations Cup tournament in Saudi Arabia in December. Zagallo explained the missed goals and hesitant defense as symptoms of year-end fatigue, but the apathy and lack of teamwork were harder to explain.

There was disharmony off the field, too. A handful of players forced everyone to shave their heads, causing some open resentment and the concern that Zagallo had lost control of the group. The worries faded when Brazil blew out Australia 6-0 in the final, with hat tricks from Romario and Rivaldo. Never mind that the Socceroos were a man short for most of the game and hadn't even qualified for the World Cup. The feeling was the Brazilians could turn it on whenever they wanted. But in the CONCACAF Gold Cup last month, they tried and couldn't.

Brazil suffered through humiliating draws



with Guatemala and Jamaica and an historic first loss to the United States, en route to a third-place finish. Back home, newspapers ran banner headlines that summed up the sentiment: "Vergonha!"—Shame. Confederation president Ricardo Teixeira stated bluntly that he was unhappy with the results and appointed Zico, with orders to restore discipline—but without overshadowing Zagallo.

"The truth is he came aboard to intervene, not to coordinate," said Oldemario Togninho, the dean of Brazilian sports writers. "The confederation lost faith in its coach. His absolute power has ended."

Zico, a brilliant player and veteran of three World Cups, hit the ground running. He announced a ban on gambling in the delegation and took a discreet poke at the team's lack of preparation. "Some of the players said they didn't know how the other team would play," Zico said. "We can never go into any competition not knowing what to expect."

Excessive self-confidence is a weakness of Zagallo, and Brazil. Zagallo likes to say he's a born winner, and not even Pele can boast his four World Cup titles: as a player in 1958 and

1962, coach in 1970 and coordinator in 1994.

But critics say he has grown complacent. Zagallo says Brazil need not be concerned with other teams, they should worry about Brazil. When asked why he hasn't studied Brazil's adversaries in the Cup—Scotland, Morocco and Norway in the first round—Zagallo said there was no hurry, he could do it a week before the game. In March, Zagallo visited the Brazilian team's practice field in France and complained about the installations. But it was too late to switch, which raised questions as to why he hadn't gone earlier.

The next games will be crucial for Zagallo to finish picking and testing his 22 players for the Cup. But most already have stamped their passports for France. The frontline is no secret. Ronaldo, the 21-year-old phenomenon of Internazionale, is Brazil's biggest hope for goals. He will be joined by 1994 Cup Most Valuable Player Romario of Flamengo, who at 32 is a step slower but still a scoring threat as well as Ronaldo's best friend. Veteran Bebeto and talented but temperamental Edmundo are likely reserves.

In goal, veteran Taffarel will get the nod despite his uneven play for Atletico Mineiro. For Zagallo, more important is Taffarel's experience in two World Cups, including on the 1994 champions.

The defense will be anchored by Roma's Aldair, another 1994 veteran. Dazzlingly talented Junior Baiano of Flamengo leads the race for the other fullback slot, but his chances are hurt by his volatile temper. He drew a two-game suspension for elbowing in the Gold Cup.

On the wings are Cafu of Roma and Roberto Carlos of Real Madrid. Cafu's speed and Roberto Carlos' fearsome left-foot are important, if predictable offensive weapons for Brazil. The team captain from 1994, Dunga of Japan's Jubilo Iwata, will be back, splitting defensive duties in the mid-field with Cesar Sampaio of the Yokohama Fluegels.

Offensive chores will fall to Denilson, the quicksilver young star of Sao Paulo. That leaves only one position unfilled. It's the virtuoso role of playmaker-defender, the elusive "10" in Zagallo's 4-3-1-2 tactical scheme. And his plans hinge on finding the right piece.

Leonardo of Milan and Rivaldo of Barcelona are the top contenders, but both are lefties and tend to clog the left side with Denilson. Juninho of Atletico Madrid, who is right-footed, was considered a sure bet until a broken leg all but eliminated him from the Cup. That opened a new chance for veteran Rai, of Paris-St. Germain. Bench for his poor play and all but forgotten since the '94 Cup, Rai will decide his fate against Germany and Argentina. Less than 90 days from kickoff, big questions remain. Can the defense jell? Can the offense click? Can Zico be effective, despite old grudges with Romario and resentment from Zagallo? Can Brazil recover its harmony and the joyful, in-your-face style that marked its best teams?

Many Brazilians frankly thought the team would be farther along than it is now. But the raw talent is overwhelming and may be enough to carry it to the title. And optimists cite a previous crisis, when the Brazilian coach was sacked shortly before the Cup. That was in 1970, and the replacement—Zagallo—steered Pele and Company to a third world title. ■



MONDIAL NEWS

Edmundo set for Fiorentina return

FLORENCE, Italy—He's back! Fiery Brazilian striker Edmundo, who has returned Goodwill Games to Fiorentina after walking out in dispute over playing time, was set to start for the Serie A club for the first time and wants a place on Brazil's World Cup squad. Brazil coach Mario Zagallo had criticized Edmundo for leaving Fiorentina, and when the player returned March 17, he vowed to earn a spot as a reserve forward for France '98.

With Anselmo Rohhiali, Domenico Morfeo and Russian Andrei Kanchelskis off-form, Fiorentina coach Alberto Malesani has said he would use Edmundo alongside Belgian international Luis Oliveira and Argentine star Gabriel Batistuta against last-place Napoli. The Brazilian allied five goals in a scrimmage against minor league team this week.

"Edmundo represents one of our recent bright spots," Malesani said. "He's working well, with humility and desire. You had he didn't before."

England gets endorsement for 2006

England has bid to stage the World Cup in 2006. That's provided Argentina doesn't bid to host it. The prime minister met a delegation from the English Football Association in Buenos Aires, Argentina, including 1966 star Bobby Charlton, sports minister Tony Banks and bid leader Alec McGivan.

Although Argentina is thinking of making its own bid, McGivan told them he would support England's bid if Argentina's didn't happen. "This is another enormous boost for the campaign," said McGivan, whose bid faces opposition from Germany and South Africa and likely from Brazil.

"We are very honored that President Menem took time out from his busy schedule to meet us and that he has thrown his full weight behind us."

Two weeks ago, FIFA president Joao Havelange gave England's bid his personal support even though he will have retired when the vote is taken in June 2000.

Asprilla may not be healthy for World Cup

The Colombian forward, whose career has been a roller-coaster ride of brilliant play and off-the-field woes, may not be healthy in time to get a call-up for the World Cup. It was revealed in Milan, Italy.

Asprilla's latest ailment, a left knee injury, has kept him out of Serie A club AC Parma's lineup. He did take the field for Colombia's friendly against Yugoslavia Wednesday, but just for a handful of minutes before limping off.

Netherlands wants to cancel Nigeria

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands—A Dutch Cabinet minister has said that a World Cup warm-up match between the Netherlands and Nigeria should be canceled because it breaches a European Union trade embargo with the African nation.

The teams, who will play in the World Cup finals in France, are scheduled to meet June 5 in Amsterdam's Arena. But Minister for Overseas Development Jan Pronk wrote in a Labor Party magazine that it would be a scandal if the match was played because it breaks sanctions imposed to protest Nigeria's poor human rights record.

However, Dutch television reported Sunday that the sports ministry has already approved the match.

Iran stars says team will do well against Germany

TEHRAN, Iran—Iranian soccer stars Ali Daei and Karim Bagheri know all about their German World Cup opponents. They play in the Bundesliga for Borussia Dortmund. "We will surprise skeptics and will do very well, even against the Germans," Daei, one of a few German-based stars that form the backbone of the national squad, said the Iranian team will advance at least to the second round.

Bagheri led World Cup qualifying with 19 goals in 17 games, including a record-setting seven in Iran's record-setting 17-0 victory over the Maldives last June. Asia's 1997 player of the year, Khodadad Azizi, who plays for Germany's Cologne, is another key player the Iranians will count on during the finals in France, which begins June 10.



Chelcea mars Gazza's Wembley return

WEMBLEY, England—Paul Gascoigne's first appearance in English soccer in seven years was in a Cup Final at Wembley Sunday, but the England star went home with a loser's medal.

The 31-year-old mid-fielder, who signed with Division One Middlesbrough from the Glasgow Rangers last week, entered the game as a second half substitute and was given a yellow card within seven minutes for hitting Chelcea's Gianfranco Zola from behind. He then saw Frank Sinclair and Roberto Di Matteo score extra time goals, giving European Cup Winners Cup semifinalist Chelcea a 2-0 victory.

Blatter and Johansson on collision course

ZURICH, Switzerland—FIFA General Secretary Sepp Blatter and UEFA president Lennart Johansson, on a collision course for the FIFA presidency, started their campaigns Sunday and the exchanges look like they're becoming a tough war of words.

"In soccer we talk so often of fair play," Johansson told the Sonntags Zeitung newspaper. "So why, for heaven's sake, don't they stick to the rules of fair play?" he asked in criticism of Blatter and the man they both hope to replace, Joao Havelange.

Blatter officially launches his campaign Monday in Paris. He has already indicated he will offer the job of FIFA sports director to French soccer hero and World Cup organizing committee chairman Michel Platini. "The time is ripe to bring a great soccer name into FIFA," Blatter told Sonntags Blick.



Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Deux millions en France

Selon le Secours catholique, une organisation caritative reconnue, ce nombre est en forte augmentation. Dans son dernier rapport annuel sur la situation des personnes en difficulté en 1996, le nombre de cas que le Secours a traités a augmenté de 10%. Dans le Pas-de-Calais (Nord), la hausse atteint même 90%. Sur le terrain, l'Etat et les collectivités locales ont tendance à se décharger sur les associations. L'an dernier, 60% des personnes accueillies par le Secours catholique ont été envoyées par les services sociaux. Chaque région connaît des difficultés spécifiques. En Alsace, ce sont les jeunes les plus touchés. En Ile-de-France, ce sont des gens surendettés, en raison du prix trop élevé des loyers. Les SDF (Sans Domicile Fixe) ne sont que la partie émergée de l'iceberg de la pauvreté : le travail, de plus en plus précaire, n'est plus un rempart suffisant contre la misère.

Nouvelles du Pays

Société

Les pauvres, tels qu'on ne les voit pas

Près d'un quart de la population a du mal à joindre les deux bouts. Depuis 1992, le nombre de Jordaniens dans la nécessité a augmenté de 50%. Face à cette tragédie, les pouvoirs publics semblent dépassés. Le Jourdain a rencontré quelques-unes de ces familles réfugiées à Wadi Abdoun, à quelques mètres du quartier le plus chic d'Amman.



Wadi Abdoun : 10.000 habitants et cinq à dix personnes par logement.

25% des indigents reçoivent une aide mensuelle

«Où que vous allez dans le pays, vous ne voyez pas de gens pieds nus, affamés ou sans eau propre». Les propos optimistes tenus devant la presse il y a quelques semaines par le Premier ministre résistent difficilement à la réalité quotidienne des Jordaniens. Le royaume compte aujourd'hui plus d'un million de personnes qui vivent au-dessous du seuil de pauvreté. «Un doublement en dix ans», confirme le ministre du Développement Social Mohammad Mamsar. Celui-ci refuse cependant de mettre en doute la politique du gouvernement et emboîte le pas de son Premier ministre quand celui-ci dénonce la pauvreté jordanienne comme «une culture de la honte». «Une des raisons de la pauvreté réside dans le fait que les gens restent seulement travailler dans les bureaux», déclare M. Mamsar. Les Jordaniens, au contraire des Égyptiens, Philippins et autres Sri Lankais, ne seraient pas prêts à prendre n'importe quel travail, malgré un taux de chômage d'environ 25%.

Aussi, le Ministère accorde une aide familiale à condition qu'aucun des membres mâles du foyer ne soit en mesure de travailler. Au passage, on notera que le travail des femmes n'est pas envisagé. De toute façon, admet Hala Al Obaidi, qui, au sein d'une organisation non gouvernementale, s'occupe des femmes de Wadi Abdoun, «elles refusent les emplois de maison qu'on leur propose», quand les maris leur permettent de travailler. Parallèlement, le Ministère signe des contrats avec des usines qui s'engagent à embaucher pendant six mois des jeunes de plus de 18 ans sans qualification qui doivent alors faire leurs preuves. De plus, en collaboration avec le Ministère du Travail, il offre des stages à des personnes en difficulté ayant pourtant poursuivi des études. L'année dernière, le gouvernement et les organisations non gouvernementales ont dépensé 140 millions de dinars pour la pauvreté. Et Mohammad Mamsar de souligner que plus de 25% des pauvres reçoivent une aide mensuelle du Ministère, qui varie en fonction des situations de famille (au maximum, 60 dinars).

Sans doute n'est-ce pas suffisant. Le ministre reconnaît notamment que la moitié seulement des orphelins bénéficie d'un soutien financier. Mais selon lui, la faute n'est pas qu'aux pouvoirs publics. Il prend l'exemple des prêts sans intérêt accordés à des gens qui ne peuvent plus travailler et subvenir aux besoins de leur famille : souvent des personnes de plus de 60 ans. Le Ministère leur octroie au plus 3000 dinars (en matériel, location de bâtiments...) pour monter un projet, comme l'ouverture d'une épicerie. «Mais la plupart du temps, explique le ministre, ils préfèrent revendre le tout pour aller se marier». Les pauvres seraient donc pauvres parce qu'ils le veulent bien ?

d'acheter du kérosène pour le chauffage». Digne et fier presque à l'excès, Abdul Hamid est un vieil homme de 94 ans dont la mauvaise santé et l'âge ne lui permettent plus de travailler. Remarié pour la troisième fois, il est pourtant le père d'une jeune famille de dix enfants dont le plus vieux n'a que 15 ans. Mais ceux-ci doivent se contenter de charité et d'une allocation du Ministère du Développement Social de 50 dinars par mois.

Ramadan Kareem

Les visages tirés par le froid et la faim, ils nous regardent comme si nous possédions le remède miracle à leurs souffrances. Pour eux, les repas se limitent souvent à du pain : «On n'achète jamais de viande, c'est un luxe auquel on n'a même pas rêver», avoue Abdul Hamid, en essayant de dissimuler ses larmes à sa famille, si on a de la chance, on pourra acheter des légumes». Pas de réfrigérateur dans ce foyer, comme presque partout ailleurs. Que pourraient-ils en faire quand ils n'ont rien à y mettre dedans ? Et le vieil homme d'ajouter : «Ce qu'on a, on le mange le jour même». A quelques mètres de là, Maha Abdul Fatah, 33 ans, mère de cinq enfants, nous accueille avec le sourire et, dans ses bras, sa petite fille d'un an, retardée mentale. Elle nous dit qu'ils vivent sur l'argent que son mari et son fils rapportent. Le mari est ouvrier en bâtiment mais il ne trouve pas toujours de boulot alors certains mois, la famille s'en tire avec les 20 dinars que ramène le fils de son

usine. «De plus, le Ministère du Développement Social nous donne 40 dinars par mois pour ma petite fille retardée», ne cache pas Maha, qui, si son mari ne l'autorise pas à travailler, sait faire appel au système D. Quand on a de l'argent, j'achète du kérosène et je le vends à la maison pour gagner un peu de sous». Malgré tous ses efforts, sa petite famille ne mange qu'une seule fois par jour ou parfois pas du tout. Perdue dans ses pensées, elle se souvient alors du Ramadan : «C'était un mois spécial parce qu'on a reçu de l'aide de gens qu'on ne connaissait même pas. Ils étaient généreux avec nous et nous ont donné beaucoup à manger».



Sous la pluie, nous entrons dans la maison de la famille Meraï dont ni la mère, ni le père ne travaillent. Les autres habitants reconnaissent que leur situation est sans doute la pire du quartier. Nawal est enceinte de huit mois avec déjà quatre jeunes enfants dont le plus âgé a huit ans. Son mari est sourd et épileptique. Elle reçoit chaque mois 35 dinars de deux mosquées mais rien du Ministère. «On vit de rien, confie Nawal qui assume toutes les responsabilités du ménage. Je demande de temps en temps à ma famille de nous soutenir mais elle n'aide quand elle peut». Pendant la conversation, ses enfants maigres vêtus légèrement ne cessent de tousser et demandent à leur mère ce qu'ils vont manger le soir. Nawal évite de leur répondre en essayant tant bien que mal d'échapper à leurs regards : Ils sont tous les quatre anémiques. «Ils n'ont mangé que des tomates aujourd'hui, finit par admettre la jeune mère, et je n'ai rien à leur offrir ce soir».

Avant de quitter le quartier, nous rencontrons de 15 ans d'Abdul Hamid, nous interpellent et nous laisse cette réflexion à méditer : «Comment voulez-vous que les pays étrangers nous aident quand il y a des châteaux et des villas comme ceux d'Abdoun. Quand les officiels voient ça, ils se disent qu'il n'y a pas de pauvreté en Jordanie ou que les Jordaniens peuvent bien aller dans leurs compatriotes ?».

Textes et photos : Samia Abu-Sharar

Culture

«Nous avons commis un faux pas»

Le festival international du théâtre indépendant perturbé par plusieurs défections. Une mauvaise organisation dont s'explique le directeur, Nader Imran.

Débonnaire dans son blouson tacheté, à l'aise et pieds nus dans ses mocassins de gala, Nader Imran confesse les erreurs de sa troupe théâtrale (Al-Fawanees) co-organisatrice du festival.

Le Jourdain : Les spectacles indonésiens et algériens ont été annulés et celui de l'Inde n'est pas assuré. Pourquoi cette désorganisation apparente ? Nader Imran : Nous avons

commis un faux pas cette année. Nous avons cherché une nouvelle manière de travailler. Le comité d'organisation a confié à des agences le soin de contacter des troupes théâtrales en Asie et en Afrique. Au début, tout a bien fonctionné. Nous avons reçu les candidatures et donné notre accord. Mais certaines troupes ont voulu troubler le déroulement du festival. La troupe indonésienne a ainsi hupé son avion. À mon avis, il ne s'agit pas de précipitation ou de problème d'organisation. Je crois que les Indonésiens n'ont pas su réserver un billet d'avion, alors qu'ils connaissent la date du festival. J'ai même l'impression qu'ils ne connaissent pas cette haute technologie qu'on appelle l'avion.

qu'avec des intermédiaires nous pourrions approcher des troupes de pays éloignés et ainsi faire de notre festival une manifestation véritablement internationale. Mais on n'obtient pas toujours ce qu'on veut.

sommes déçus et nous avons tenté de pallier la défection des troupes déjà citées en les remplaçant par les pièces prévues normalement au théâtre Osama Al-Mashini.

L. J. : Vous pensez donc que ce n'était pas la meilleure façon de procéder ? N. I. : Non, je crois que l'idée de travailler avec des intermédiaires était bonne au départ. Mais c'est surtout leur j'en-toutisme qui est à mettre en cause.

L. J. : On peut vous reprocher tout de même de ne pas vous être assez investis dans la préparation de ce festival. N. I. : Faux, nous avons mis le paquet dès le début pour que ce festival soit un succès. C'est la première fois qu'il connaît de telles difficultés. Nous en

L. J. : En raison de toutes ces défections, le festival perd de son internationalisme. Ne vaut-il mieux pas le limiter à la région ? N. I. : Non, je ne crois pas. La France et la Suède (dans les ateliers, NDLR) étaient présents. Notre festival doit être international. A part Israël, nous n'introduisons à aucune troupe étrangère d'y participer. L'indépendance de Mars. Celles qui ne participent pas à venir jusqu'ici, tant pis pour elles !

Propos recueillis par Nader Al-Khalouf et Yannick Laine

Irbid, retour sur scène

Pour la première fois depuis la création du festival, Amman n'est plus seule en scène. Irbid participe cette année à la fête du théâtre indépendant. Deux spectacles, par la troupe jordanienne Al-Fawanees et le Théâtre palestinien du jour, étaient programmés dans la troisième ville du royaume. La pièce indonésienne, quant à elle, a été annulée pour ci-contre l'entretien avec Nader Imran.

Voilà donc la ville du nord qui attire le gretot et ouvre les portes de ses théâtres après un long sommeil culturel. Irbid fait même d'une pierre deux coups : attirer l'attention sur sa santé culturelle chancelante et lancer un festival du théâtre du nord dans lequel sont intégrées les pièces du grand frère international. Pourquoi avoir choisi Irbid ? «Les capacités techniques y sont suffisantes, justifie Ahd Al-Rahim Ghanam, l'organisateur, il y a un grand théâtre, Al-Sharq, où l'on peut regrouper toutes les manifestations du festival, un théâtre soutenu uniquement par le secteur privé». D'autre part, la troupe théâtrale d'Irbid a des liens privilégiés avec l'équipe de Nader Imran. «Enfin, conclut Ahd Al-Rahim, Irbid fut la première ville jordanienne à programmer du théâtre dans les années 20. L'histoire ne doit pas seulement se répéter mais à présent s'enrichir».

N.K.

L. J. : Pourquoi avez-vous laissé à d'autres une partie de l'organisation du festival ? N. I. : En fait nous ne connaissions pas toutes les troupes du monde. Nous espérons donc

Sport

Z'y-va, le marathon de la mort !

Demain plus de 150 coureurs s'élanceront vers la Mer morte pour le marathon le moins élevé du globe. L'ultra sera l'épreuve reine : 50 kilomètres pour un dénivelé total de 1300 mètres. Impressions d'avant-course avec deux favoris.

Rim Farkouh sera-t-elle la première femme à parcourir les 50 kilomètres ? Tous ses amis l'espèrent et sans doute involontairement lui ajoutent un peu plus de pression sur les épaules. La jeune femme demeure réservée sur un pronostic. Bien sûr, le marathon ne lui fait pas peur. Ces trois dernières années, elle est venue à bout des 42 kilomètres 195. Mais cette fois, c'est une autre affaire : «Rendez-vous compte qu'après 42 kilomètres, on est déjà crevé dans un court 8 de plus, c'est horrible». Elle ne cherchera donc pas la performance. Terminer sera sa récompense, une preuve pour elle-même. Cette amatrice du sport évoque alors le déclassement d'une concurrente l'année passée : «Quand vous trichez, vous trichez d'abord avec vous-même». Pour l'édition 98, les contrôles seront plus sévères avec des arbitres tous les quatre kilomètres et une surveillance accrue entre les points fixes. «Nous voulons que cette course soit mieux reconnue au niveau international», explique Rim Farkouh qui fait aussi partie du comité d'organisation. Un jour, pourquoi pas, le marathon de la Mer morte sera comparable à celui de New York.



Pour Adrian Bailey, tout est nouveau dans cette course. La distance : ce jeune Gallois de 22 ans est surtout un habitué des semi-marathons ; le terrain : l'ensemble du parcours se déroule sur bitume, lui s'est jusqu'à présent distingué en cross country ; le lieu : c'est la première fois qu'il court dans la région. Une occasion de «découvrir une culture différente». Pendant son séjour, il aura entraîné ses baskets à Pétra et dans le désert de Wadi Rum. Une équipe de télévision britannique l'accompagne et filme ses exploits et la course proprement dite pour une série documentaire sur les marathons les plus difficiles et les plus originaux du monde.

Mais Adrian Bailey n'est pas simplement venu pour compléter sa vidéothèque d'escapades touristiques. Depuis cinq mois, cet amateur, qui par ailleurs travaille dans un centre de loisirs au Pays de Galles, suit un programme d'entraînement très varié et court environ 110 kilomètres par semaine. Il arrive affûté pour cette course un peu spéciale. Avec un temps final attendu autour des trois heures, il espère terminer dans les cinq premiers, en cachant mal de plus hautes ambitions. Parmi ses craintes : la possible chaleur et les 20 kilomètres du parcours en pente raide, «terribles pour les jambes». Pour le reste, «c'est surtout une question de confiance en soi».



Vième marathon de la Mer morte : départ demain à 6h30 depuis le 7ème cercle. Trois courses en individuel ou par équipe : 21, 42 ou 50 kilomètres. Remise des trophées prévue à 14h sur le stand d'arrivée, quelques centaines de mètres avant le Dead Sea Spa Hotel.

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Luis Buñuel. Le film *Mon oncle* de 1959 en noir et blanc non sous-titré en arabe avec Gérard Philipe. Le jour de la fête nationale, un spectacle offert par le gouvernement d'une île où se trouve le pénitencier d'un État sud-américain. Lundi 6 avril à 18h30 et 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Renseignements au 4636445 ou 4637009.

Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie, film de 1942 en couleur sous-titré en arabe avec Delphine Seyrig. Derrière les civilisés, les bourgeois attablés se cachent la trouille, l'égoïsme, la méchanceté. Lundi 13 avril à 18h30 et 20h30 au CCF.

Vième festival du théâtre indépendant

Programme du 2 au 5 avril

Attention ! Le programme ci-dessous est susceptible de changements. Aussi il est préférable d'appeler les organisateurs au 5624413 ou le Centre culturel royal au 5661026 avant le spectacle.

Centre culturel royal-Théâtre rond, 19h30
2 avril : *Amelia* d'Alfred Hitchcock, par la troupe Al-Fawanees (Jordanie)
3 et 4 avril : *Isis* d'Alfred Hitchcock, par le Théâtre du jour (Palestine)

Centre culturel royal-Salle principale, 21h00
2 avril : *Amelia*, par une troupe indienne
3 et 4 avril : *Amelia*, par la troupe El Teatro (Tunisie)
5 avril : Soirée de clôture

Théâtre Osama Al-Mashini-Djebel Lweibdeh, 18h00
3 avril : *Al-Mashini*, lecture
4 avril : *Al-Mashini*, par le Théâtre pour tous (Palestine)

Les pièces sont jouées dans la langue du pays d'origine. Prix des places : 4 JD.

THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies !!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us at 4648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.jo with your news and views.

Creating a 'mania' typical of every Windows release:

Windows '98 set for summer

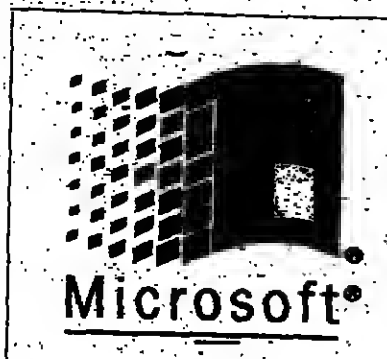
WINDOWS 98, the latest operating system from Microsoft, is expected to be launched sometime in the middle of 1998, which means this major event is just a few months away.

Bill Gates, CEO at Microsoft, made the announcement at a time when Microsoft was facing legal allegations regarding the inclusion of Microsoft Explorer as part of the Windows 98 package.

Over the past couple of months, Microsoft has been shipped with an anti-trust suit stating that it engaged in "illegal competitive practices" and that the company forces computer suppliers and manufacturers to bundle Explorer, the internet browser developed by Microsoft—with every copy of the operating system.

Accordingly, Microsoft is utilizing its supremacy in the operating systems field to push its software in other fields.

The case still rages on, without a definitive result in sight, as yet. Whether or not this massive legal action against Microsoft will cause any changes in the Windows 98 release schedule remains to be seen. However, for now, the company is gearing up to unleash the long-awaited new version, that will replace Windows 95, which has become the operating system standard on most computers worldwide.



Gates announced that Windows 98 and the latest version of Windows NT were in the final beta testing stages. So, with the release several months away, some resellers have begun to take customer orders for Windows 98 even before the product is introduced. The expected price is around \$95 for the upgrade, and \$180 for the full version.

This is all happening amidst no "fixed" or "definite" announcements regarding either the exact release date this summer, or pricing. Microsoft has made it clear that the price of Windows 98 would be similar to Windows 95. So, speculations abound.

This is typical of the state of "mania" that sweeps the computer industry every time Microsoft is about to release an

upgrade for Windows. Usually, even before making it to the shelves, an upcoming Microsoft operating system tends to kill sales of competing systems.

The Microsoft propaganda machine, aided by a more-than-enthusiastic media, causes massive sell-outs and major record breaking sales figures on the actual day of release.

For now, Windows fans can rest assured that their favorite operating system will be upgraded this summer, maybe sometime in early July. Until then, sit tight and "hold your breath." From the looks of it, the rest of the world is doing exactly that. ■

A look at misconceptions surrounding the computer profession: Viewing 'Computer people' as specialists

By Mana Nazal

WHEN PEOPLE socially ask me, "What do you do?", I reply—using a literal translation of the Arabic expression—"I work with computers."

Immediately, I get swamped with questions and queries such as, "Don't you just love the Internet?" "Should I buy a Pentium or wait till Pentium 2 comes out?" "How much does a computer cost these days?" or "Don't you enjoy playing this game called XYZ?"

I always find myself explaining that there are different areas of specialty and interest in the field of computers, and that specialists in these fields can be an expert of all areas pertaining to computing!

However, the repetition of such incidents of "question-burdening" leads me to believe that more clarity is required in defining these

specialities.

A computer specialist in hardware will know a lot about PCs—what brands there are in the local market, the various configurations and parts, and where these motherboards, processors, types of Ram, and hard disks are available.

A specialist in software would know about operating systems, such as Windows and DOS, programming languages and coding.

A communications specialist would know about the Internet, fax/modems and their speeds, transmission rates, etc. Of course, each would know some basic market information, regarding pricing, the best suppliers and how to acquire the product or service.

For example, the hardware specialist may point out good computer suppliers whose prices are reasonable; the software specialist would recommend particular software solutions to suit your budget; the networking specialist would tell you which networking hardware and software are well supported by local dealers; and, finally, the communications specialist would give you a run-down of Internet service providers and maybe tell you something about their pricing plans.

Within the above four wide fields, there is more specialization. The field of computers has become so vast that it is important to label the different specialties and provide clear titles for so-called "computer people," according to their credentials. Maybe this would make life easier for all those people who have so many questions to ask! ■

Build your own PC on the Web via new Kayyali Computer site

KAYYALI COMPUTERS is introducing a pioneering idea, utilizing the Internet.

The company is in the final stages of refining a special "Build-Your-Own-PC" site, through which users can log in, select the PC components they want, add to them any chosen peripherals, and get an immediate price quote!

What's more, users can place an order on-line and have their PC prepared and delivered.

It is truly an innovative concept, that merges shopping on-line with a very customized means of selecting computer hardware.

To further encourage users, Kayyali Computers plans incentive prizes to buyers on-line.

Prizes include SmartLink modems, and US Drives complete multimedia kits.

The site is being developed in cooperation with Arabist, a web development and consultancy specialist company based in Amman.

For more information, check out the company's site at www.kayyali.com. ■

American Computer Show '98 opens

AMID MUCH enthusiasm and swarming crowds, the Sixth Annual American Computer Show opened on Tuesday 31st March under the Patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Bin Al Hussein. The show is located at the Radisson SAS Hotel in Amman. The event brings together some thirty information technology and computer firms, showcasing the latest hardware, software and services. Of course, all products on show are American-made, which means that you can find all popular brands including Compaq, IBM, AST, Tri-Min, Apple, US Robotics, CISCO and many, many others. The show, Thursday 2 April, is the last day of the show. Don't miss it. ■



Saudi authorities confiscate 45,000 illegal CDs

SAUDI ARABIAN authorities have confiscated 45,000 CDs containing pirated computer software. This massive figure is the sum of the software collected from "raiding" tens of pirate establishments since the summer of 1997.

Software industry watchdog, the Business Software Alliance (BSA) estimates that around \$100 million was lost last year in Saudi Arabia due to software piracy. Illegally copied software accounts for around 75 percent of software in use in the country. However, this is set to change with recent moves by the government.

This is part of Saudi Arabia's efforts to enter the World Trade Organization, membership in which obliges enforcement of strict intellectual property rights. Nowadays, Saudi authorities even penalize firms with fines for using illegally copied software. ■

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

A need for a year 2000 policy in Jordan

IF THE governments of the world's most powerful countries, such as the United States and Britain, are concerned about the implications of the Year 2000 problem, then maybe we'd better be doing something about it, too. It seems to be the right thing to set out an official plan, mutually drawn by the Jordanian Government and representatives of the private sector, to counter the hazards expected to take place at midnight, 31 December, 1999.

The Year 2000 problem can be described as an expected malfunction in computers, due to the fact that these systems will not be able to tell the difference between the year 1900 and the year 2000. This is because computers use a two-digit date system, by which both turns of century are referred to as "00". Accordingly, it is expected that most computer systems will report errors, and cause all sorts of havoc in banks, hospitals, airlines, insurance companies and any other fields of business where efficient date-keeping is crucial to operation. It could be life-threatening in some situations!

Already, governments around the world are raising money in order to cover the costs of fixing up this computer shortcoming, by re-programming systems and re-coding software.

This process is costly, and there is little time to complete it. Even Western governments who have been on top of the matter for the past year or so, fear they won't correct all their systems in time. British Prime Minister Tony Blair summed up this concern by saying, "This is one deadline we can't push forward!"

What we need in Jordan is an awareness campaign, to ensure that organizations evaluate their software systems' status and finalize a status report before the middle of this year to determine the nature of corrective action that should be taken. This could be organized in the form of an officially announced committee, responsible for spotting Year 2000 problems, and working to solve them! Of course, this program has to be applied at a national level, with hundreds of participants, in all Governmental offices of the country.

Hopefully, our authorities will take note, and our private sector will evaluate the dangers associated with the Year 2000 problem. It is absolutely necessary, to ensure continuity in many aspects of our daily lives which are computerized.

A 'slight' slowdown in Internet services?

TWO YEARS after the launch of full Internet services in Jordan, including the rise of several Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Web design and development firms and related businesses, it seems there has been a mild slowdown in Internet enthusiasm.

It's not that people are not signing up for Internet accounts, it's just that there is too much competition, in a relatively small market!

I believe that the Internet market in Jordan is growing, but service providers are receiving a smaller piece of the cake, and business is being dispersed to several parties.

There are five Internet Service Providers, currently in operation: Global One, NETS, Index, FirstNet, JoinNet. There are tens of Web development companies, and more to come. Here it is worth asking the question, where is the market headed?

It would be natural to assume that only three main ISPs will maintain a powerful foothold. It is also expected that the Web development market will change in nature, due to a direction among most customers to develop their own Web and Internet content in-house. In a way, the picture is brighter than some may have us believe, it's just a matter of time before things level off and clear market leaders emerge to provide superior, quality, lower-priced Internet and related on-line services. ■

Global One is the pioneering provider of full Internet services in Jordan

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By Sarah Kaufman

WASHINGTON—In the dim light and haze of the Ballroom in Southeast Washington, past meets present on the crowded dance floor. Over by the elevated, deejay booth, John Ives jerks his body to the heavy hit of the techno rhythm. Stepping backward, he curves out a circle of space. As the others clear away, he begins to break-dance. He dives chest-first to the floor, where he pivots on his fingertips, unfolding upside down like a spinning pinwheel with his legs in the air.

When he jumps to his feet and backs out of the circle, other break-dancers step in, showing off the acrobatic moves of the street technicians who paired up with boomboxes and rappers during the '80s. In minute-long bursts, the breakers whirl around on their heads, their legs churning like eggbeaters. One tall dancer springs onto his head and forearms, spinning vertically like an electric screwdriver. Another lands on the floor in a spread-eagle position, swiveling around to propel himself on his shoulder.

Break-dancing is back—that is to say, back in the mainstream, though its fans say it never went away. The aggressive inner-city art form has found new expression with the largely white suburban crowd at local raves and at all-night dance parties like "Buzz," held Friday nights in the Ballroom, a former warehouse. Break-dancers can also be spotted Wednesday nights at the Edge, host to the rave-styled "Pollen." Thursdays at Tracks, home to hard-thumping house music, and occasionally on Saturday nights at the Circle's "Deep" party.

For the first time in years, a profusion of break-dancers is showing up on music videos. In "Run-DMC vs. Jason Nevins"—"It's Like That" video, two multiracial dance crews battle one another—competing with gymnastic feats, jittering robotic moves or cooing, slithering ones—in Nevins' remix of the 1983 rap classic. A new ProPellerheads video features break-dancing, and old-school breakers spinning on cardboard are on view in the clip for Fatboy Slim's "Going Out of My Head."

On a recent segment of "MTV Live," host Carson Daly marked break-dancing's resurgence with scorching studio performances by Q-Unique and Sweezy, two dancers with Rock Steady Crew, perhaps the oldest and most popular touring break-dance company.

The advertising world has jumped on the eye-catching dance form and its appeal to young people. A fast-paced new commercial for Coca-Cola features guys spiraling on their heads with their legs blurring like buzz saws. The commercial was developed by the Wieden & Kennedy ad agency, having scooped out clubs in several large cities. It noticed a "break-dancing revival." "In using that in the ads we're trying to reflect what's important to the youth that we're targeting," says Coca-Cola spokeswoman Susan McDermott. "We really want to be fresh and make sure the ads reflect the most recent trends."

Twenty years after its popular breakthrough, break-dancing is appealing to a new generation. Philadelphia's Rennie Harris, whose group, Rennie Harris / Pure Movement, brings hip-hop dance to the concert stage, reports a steady interest in his classes, of which break-dancing is a component. The producers of "Jam on the Groove," an internationally touring break-dance show by GhenOriginal Productions, say their stage is swarmed with amateur breakers—even father-son duos—in the open jam after each performance. (Sponsored by fashion giant Calvin Klein, the show heads next to Japan, home to a keen interest in all things hip-hop.)

The second annual B-Boy Masters/Pro-Am Conference in Miami wrapped up four days of workshops recently on such topics as graffiti and music, as well as dance competitions. (or "battles"), participants attended from around the world. And in London last fall, the PlayStation UK break-dance Championship attracted some 2,000 breakers. Break-dancing also surfaced recently at Arena Stage's Old Var Theater in Washington, which showcased the African Continuum Theatre Company's "Hip Hop Nightmares of Jube Brown."

The return of break-dancing may come as a surprise to those who assumed the form tripped on its own fat, unfilled shoelaces and died years ago. Some suspect the revival may be due to a rekindling of interest in the '80s. "We've already eaten up the '70s," says Stephen Hill, MTV's

director of music programming. "What used to take 20 years to change in the culture—in fashion, music, or culture—now only takes 10 years. That's why we're seeing the '80s come back so quickly. It used to take 20 years to look back and say, 'Oh my gosh—how did we ever do that?'" He notes that the attitude toward break-

dancing, however, is not ironic. "It's looking back with a fondness," he says, "rather than with tongue-in-cheek disdain."

Break-dance's diachrons are a stalwart and faithful bunch who see the form not just as recreation but as a component of a clean-living, fun-loving and racially tolerant lifestyle.

John Ives, at 31 a veteran among the throng of ravers at "Buzz," a dance party in Washington, D.C., says break-dancing is "a spiritual experience... I go out and I'm working on myself, on my art." Photo by Gerald Martineau.

ain. A problematic part of the scene has been the drug Ecstasy, described by some of its users as a "psychedelic amphetamine" that reputedly enhances the rave experience.

But drugs and break-dancing don't mix, insist the ravers-turned-breakers.

"It's a straight-edge culture," says "Buzz" regular Stephen Blackwell, 28. He's wearing a knit ski hat and dark sweat suit. "You can't dance when you're all messed up."

Break-dancing, says Ives, at 31 a veteran among the throng of ravers, who are mostly in their twenties, is "a spiritual experience... I go out and I'm working on myself, on my art."

Jay Poleon, 19, is one of the few black dancers at "Buzz." He says the break-dancers are more diverse at the raves in his home town of Philadelphia. He's been break-dancing only about nine months, he says, though he's been going to raves for two years. Why did he start break-dancing?

"It's something new," he says. "You can express your body in different ways... I tried it and I was hooked."

Ives, who goes by the name Jiggidy Jivez on the dance floor, says he first encountered breaking while he was teaching at Tracks. He'd always been interested in dance—he studied ballet as a teen, and performs modern dance occasionally with the dance department of Mary Washington College, near his home town of Fredericksburg, Virginia. But when he saw the break-dancing, he was smitten.

"I just saw it and said, 'That's it—that's what I like.'" He started copying the moves he saw, practicing on the sidelines at the club. One night an "old-schooler"—Charles Gore, a former break-dance performer—approached him to offer some pointers.

"The biggest correction he gave me was 'Relax, relax, relax—you look like you're constipated,'" Ives says. He began working with Gore to better his technique, though he acknowledges much remains beyond his grasp.

Gore, 33, says he started break-dancing in the early '80s, when he was a deejay at the old 9:30 club. The adrenaline-charged feel of it, he says, is close to intoxicating.

"It's extreme. Like being on a roller coaster when it drops," he says. "It's a total draw on all your muscles."

Gore danced with a couple of "crews"—the Warpath Braves, the Supreme Team—performing in places like the Washington Convention Center and the Kennedy Center. As popular interest in break-dancing died in the late '80s, performing opportunities dried up, and Gore took to brushing off his moves only occasionally at local clubs.

"One night some young kid saw me poppin'," he recalls, "and he said, 'Man, that's an old dance.' But when Gore finished his routine, his critic had changed his view. "He was like, 'Can you teach me that?'" I said, 'No, that's an old dance, sorry.' ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Break-dancing stages a comeback

John Ives, at 31 a veteran among the throng of ravers at "Buzz," a dance party in Washington, D.C., says break-dancing is "a spiritual experience... I go out and I'm working on myself, on my art." Photo by Gerald Martineau.

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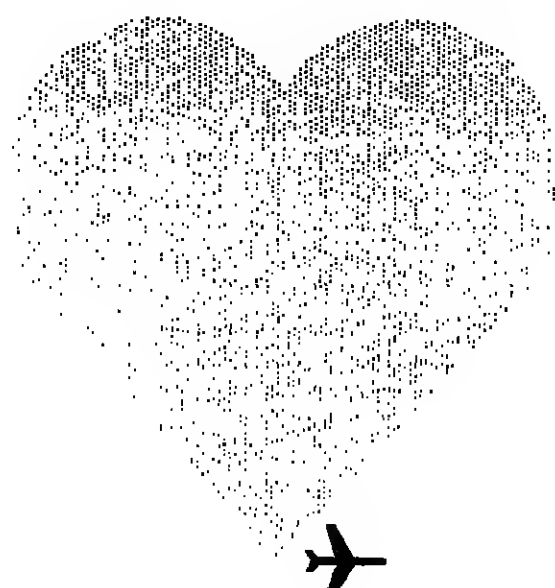


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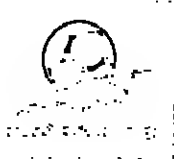
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AIR FRANCE

WINNING THE HEARTS OF THE WORLD

The Perils of Pavarotti

By Justin Davidson

NEW YORK—Luciano Pavarotti has been singing the role of Nemorino, the gullible and inebriated young hunk in Donizetti's "L'Elisir d'Amore," for more than 30 years. But it's probably safe to say that his performances earlier this month at the Metropolitan Opera will be his last in that role in New York, and possibly anywhere.

The 62-year-old tenor, who still draws tens of thousands to hear him perform in stadiums and commands TV audiences of millions, is scheduled to sing Cavardossi in just three performances of Puccini's "Tosca" at the Met in the fall. The gala concert at the end of that run, commemorating the 30th anniversary of his Met debut, could double as a farewell from the opera stage. Pavarotti has a few more "Three Tenors" concerts in his appointment book, but as for what happens after that, manager Herbert Breslin said, "We'll see. The planning is very loose for now." Seated in a regal black leather office chair behind a desk in his Central Park South apartment on a recent evening, the tenor echoed his manager's tentativeness. "After the next few months, I'll take stock," Pavarotti said, with little of the jovial optimism and big-bodied "bonhomie" that has helped make him an icon of The Italian Tenor. "For now, I've got to demonstrate to myself that I'm in good health," he said. "Then I'll decide what direction to move in." Speaking in his native Italian, he sounded serious and reflective as he answered questions about his age, his health, and his dwindling plans for the future.

"I think that I'll have to stop sooner or later," Pavarotti said, as if he had some other option. "But if I stop, the only reason will be a physical failing of some kind." He declined to elaborate, but over the past decade his weight, which hovers around 350 pounds, has all but crippled him, forcing the tenor to sing impassioned love scenes from the comfort of a stool and conduct putative sword fights behind a screen of chorus members. To his old list of afflictions—allergy to stage dust, flu, laryngitis, fatigue, arthritis and scurvy Pavarotti recently added another. In the middle of a pension benefit fund concert at the Met, he suffered a dizzy spell, possibly due to high blood pressure, scaring himself enough to go home at intermission and cancel two performances of "Elisir" so he could rest. He also decided that he wouldn't be up to singing three scheduled performances of Verdi's "Aida" at the Met in the spring of 1999.

Still, he is fond of citing the example of his father, a retired baker in the Italian town of Modena who, at 86,

still sings in church every week with the voice, according to the son, of a much younger man. The implication is clear: Luciano's fantasy is to keep impersonating operatic youths as long as he can still hobble into the spotlight.

"I'm a fanatic of the stage," he said. "I don't want to say that I hope to die onstage—I don't. I hope to die peacefully in my bed at a very advanced age. But there are times when I get to the end of 'Rigoletto' that I would sing it



all over again. The second 'Elisir' last month felt that way, too." Critics, though, tend not to believe that he has either the stamina or the voice to get through many more operatic performances. "From what I've heard recently, it sounds as though it's really beginning to fail him," said Peter Davis, who reviewed Pavarotti's Met debut in 1968 for The New York Times and is now the music critic at New York magazine. "He's had so many vocal problems. I don't know of any singers who have sung as badly as he has for two years at his age and then recovered."

Far from making concessions to the passage of time, Pavarotti has tended to raise the stakes as he has gotten older. He began his career as a sunny lyric tenor with the agility to handle the twirling vocal stunts and delicate lines of Rossini, Mozart and Donizetti. Only in his 40s did he begin to add to his repertoire Verdi's weightier dramatic roles—the title role in "Ernani," "Raiders in 'Aida,' 'Manrico in 'Il Trovatore'—not always with great success.

Many critics see Pavarotti's cancellation habit and his resume of high-

profile fiascos as a sign of fame-induced numbness. At the beginning, his reviews consistently were packed with praise: for the open, brassy beauty of his voice, for the voltage that cycled through his singing, for making opera sound unmanicured, spontaneous and exuberant. But by the early 1980s, Pavarotti had become more than just an opera singer. He was a mass-media phenomenon, and much of the writing about him turned sour.

"I never thought things would get so big," he said. "But then I never took into account a very good friend: television." In 1978, with a concert that was broadcast from the Met to 12 million viewers, he became the first classical singer to give a full recital on live TV. He made a movie, "Yes, Giorgio" (which even he admits was dreadful). He made the cover of both Newsweek and Time magazines. He began to sing, not only in concert halls, but also in stadiums, like a genuine rock star.

The crowds were enthralled. The critics were not.

"When I've experienced him at events like the 'Three Tenors' concerts, he's not half the artist he is when he sings opera," said Davis, the New York magazine critic, echoing many of his colleagues. "He doesn't seem to care anymore. Every time he appears, any time or anywhere, the opera becomes of secondary interest and it's the Luciano Pavarotti Show. What's art got to do with it?"

Pavarotti hears only noxious snobbery in such criticism, brushing away the issue of whether he tries as hard at Giants Stadium as he does at the Met. "To say that music is only for the elect, for refined minds—that's a fine of thinking that shocks me," he said. "My harbor in Modena was the greatest connoisseur of opera I've ever known. Music is like sports: You don't need to explain it."

"If you've been able to serve 500,000 people, the way we did in Central Park, where they all came for free and went away feeling fine, well, then, you've only done a good deed." And if money flows from such good deeds, well, much of it goes to save off other hungry than his. "We've set up a music center in Bosnia, and our next benefit concert is to raise money for a village of orphans in Liberia," he said, pointing to a plaque he had received from the United Nations the day before, designating him honorary Ambassador for Peace. "Tell me, what is there for me to regret?"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service